

HISTORY OF EUROPE

DURING

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

“ **BELLUM** maxime omnium memorabile, quæ unquam gesta sint, me scripturum ; quod, Hannibale duce, Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessere. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit : et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas primo Punico conserebant bello ; odiis etiam prope majoribus certarunt, quam viribus ; et adeo varia belli fortuna ancepsque Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerint, qui vicerunt.”—*LIV.* lib. 21.

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

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ADVOCATE.

VOLUME THE THIRTEENTH.

SEVENTH EDITION.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

M.DCCC.XLVIII

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

CONTENTS OF VOL. XIII.

CHAPTER LIX.

CAMPAIGN OF WAGRAM.

	Page
§ 1. Views and policy of Napoleon at this juncture, - - - - -	1
2. Forces of Napoleon in the island of Lobau, - - - - -	2
3. Forces and views of the Archduke Charles at the same juncture, - - -	3
4. Napoleon's projects for crossing the Danube, - - - - -	4
5. Prodigious works executed in the island of Lobau by the French Em- peror, - - - - -	5
6. Hidden real designs of the Emperor as to the point of passage, - - -	6
7. Defensive operations of the Austrians, - - - - -	8
8. Efforts of Napoleon to clear his rear and flanks, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
9. The French are checked in their attempts to force a passage at Presburg,	9
10. Retreat of the Archduke John to Raab, and position which he took up there, - - - - -	10
11. Battle of Raab, - - - - -	11
12. Varied success, but final victory of the Viceroy, - - - - -	12
13. Defeat and losses of the Austrians, - - - - -	13
14. Siege and capture of Raab, - - - - -	14
15. Operations of Marmont and Macdonald in Illyria and Carinthia, - - -	<i>ib.</i>
16. Extraordinary difficulties which Giulay and Chastellar encountered, -	15
17. Operations of Giulay in Carniola and Styria, - - - - -	16
18. Attack on Broussier near Gratz, - - - - -	17
19. Junction of Eugene to the Grand Army, and reoccupation of Croatia by the Austrians, - - - - -	18
20. Operations in Poland, and successes of the Polish detachments at San- domir and Zamosc, - - - - -	19
21. Recapture of Warsaw by the Poles, and retreat of the Archduke Ferdi- nand, - - - - -	20
22. Concluding operations of the campaign in Poland, - - - - -	21
23. Cracow is occupied by the Poles, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
24. Extraordinary concentration of the French forces in the island of Lobau,	22
25. Efforts of Napoleon to restore the spirit of his soldiers, - - - - -	24

CONTENTS.

	Page
26. Force and disposition of the Austrian army, - - - - -	24
27. Positions of the Austrian corps, - - - - -	25
28. False preparations for a passage in front of Aspern, - - - - -	26
29. Extraordinary passage of the Danube by Napoleon, - - - - -	27
30. Dreadful tempest and scene during the passage, - - - - -	ib.
31. Vast advantages gained by this manœuvre to the French, - - - - -	28
32. Retreat of the Austrians to the position of Wagram, - - - - -	30
33. Its description and great strength, - - - - -	ib.
34. Advance of the French over the Marchfield, - - - - -	31
35. Vehement attack of the French on the plateau of Wagram, - - - - -	32
36. Which after a desperate struggle is at length repulsed, - - - - -	33
37. Position and plan of Napoleon for the battle on the following day, - - - - -	34
38. The Archduke resolves to assume the offensive, - - - - -	35
39. His plan of attack, - - - - -	36
40. Commencement of the battle of Wagram, - - - - -	ib.
41. Defeat of Massena in the centre, - - - - -	37
42. Napoleon's measures to arrest the disorder, - - - - -	38
43. Dreadful trial to which the troops were exposed in executing them, - - - - -	39
44. Splendid progress of the Austrian right towards Essling, - - - - -	40
45. Success of Davoust against the Austrian left wing, - - - - -	41
46. Terrible shock which there took place, - - - - -	42
47. Neusiedel is taken, and the Austrian left driven back, - - - - -	ib.
48. Grand attack by Napoleon from the centre, - - - - -	43
49. Decisive advance of Macdonald in the centre, - - - - -	45
50. Measures of Napoleon to support that attack, - - - - -	46
51. Retreat of the Archduke, - - - - -	ib.
52. Appearance of the Austrian army, and bloody encounters on its retreat, - - - - -	47
53. Tardy approach and retreat of the Archduke John. Vital importance of his co-operation, - - - - -	48
54. Striking nocturnal alarm which illustrated it, - - - - -	ib.
55. Results of the battle, - - - - -	49
56. Loss of the battle was owing to the Archduke John's neglect of orders, - - - - -	50
57. Decisive evidence which exists of this, - - - - -	51
58. Napoleon visits the field of battle, - - - - -	52
59. And makes Macdonald a marshal, - - - - -	53
60. Appointment of Oudinot and Marmont marshals of the empire. Disgrace of Bernadotte, - - - - -	54
61. Who is appointed to the command of Antwerp, and again disgraced, - - - - -	55
62. The Austrians retire towards Bohemia, - - - - -	56
63. And take the road to Znaym, - - - - -	ib.
64. Retreat of the Archduke to Znaym, and his position there, - - - - -	57
65. Combat at Znaym, - - - - -	58
66. Advance of Marmont, and conclusion of the armistice of Znaym, - - - - -	59
67. Motives which led the Austrians to this step, - - - - -	ib.
68. Arguments against the armistice at the French headquarters, - - - - -	60
69. And for peace, which Napoleon adopts, - - - - -	61
70. Limits assigned to the two armies by the armistice, - - - - -	ib.
71. Hesitation of the Emperor of Austria to sign the armistice, which is only done on the 18th. Heavy contributions levied on Austria, - - - - -	62
72. Comparison of the battle of Wagram with those of Cannæ and Waterloo, - - - - -	63
73. Reflections on the campaign, and its glorious character to Austria, - - - - -	64
74. Other empires have all sunk with the fall of the capital, - - - - -	ib.
75. Proof thereby afforded of the practical blessings of the Austrian government, - - - - -	65
76. Great degree of material prosperity in Austria Proper, - - - - -	66
77. Causes of the extraordinary public virtue thus exhibited in Austria, - - - - -	ib.

CONTENTS.

iii

	Page
§ 78. Remarkable contrast afterwards exhibited by France, - - - -	67
79. Elevation of the Austrian character from past calamities, - - - -	68
80. Glorious position Austria now occupied, - - - -	ib.

CHAPTER LX.

WALCHEREN EXPEDITION—PEACE OF VIENNA—SECOND WAR IN THE TYROL— DETHRONEMENT OF THE POPE.

§ 1. Vast capabilities of the Scheldt for commerce, - - - -	70
2. Former grandeur and present importance of Antwerp, - - - -	71
3. Napoleon's designs for its amplification, - - - -	72
4. Efforts always made by England to keep this great stronghold from France, - - - -	73
5. Extraordinary infatuation which has led to its abandonment in later times, - - - -	ib.
6. Proposals of Austria for a British diversion, - - - -	74
7. Reasons for not sending the expedition to the north of Germany or Spain, - - - -	75
8. Reasons for selecting the Scheldt as the point of attack, - - - -	76
9. Unhappy delay in the expedition, - - - -	77
10. The expedition is resolved on in the end of May, and on a very great scale, - - - -	78
11. Sailing and immense magnitude of the expedition, - - - -	79
12. Landing in Holland, and great early success of the expedition, - - - -	80
13. Certainty of success if Antwerp had been first attacked, - - - -	81
14. Ruinous delay on the part of Lord Chatham, who besieges Flushing first, - - - -	82
15. Siege and capture of Flushing, - - - -	83
16. The time lost in reducing Flushing saves Antwerp, - - - -	ib.
17. The retention of Walcheren, at first attempted, is at last abandoned as hopeless, - - - -	84
18. Blind injustice which frequently characterises the proceedings of the British parliament, - - - -	85
19. Pernicious consumption of time in debates in parliament at this time, - - - -	86
20. Charges against the Duke of York, - - - -	87
21. His resignation in consequence of the universal clamour, - - - -	88
22. Debates on the Walcheren expedition, - - - -	ib.
23. The real points in which the conduct of the expedition was blameable were not touched on, - - - -	89
24. Quarrel between Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning, - - - -	90
25. Which leads to a duel between them, and the resignation of both, - - - -	91
26. Changes in the administration, - - - -	ib.
27. Youth and first introduction to public life of Mr Canning, - - - -	92
28. His character as an orator and statesman, - - - -	93
29. His faults and inconsistencies, - - - -	94
30. Character of Castlereagh, - - - -	95
31. Elevated features of his character, - - - -	96
32. Career of Mr Perceval, - - - -	97
33. His character, - - - -	98
34. Position of France in relation to Russia at this period, - - - -	99
35. Negotiation between France and Austria, - - - -	100
36. Napoleon's reasons for secret disquietude, - - - -	101
37. Attempt to assassinate him by Stabs, - - - -	102
38. Who is condemned and executed, - - - -	ib.
39. Which leads to the conclusion of the negotiation, - - - -	103
40. Peace of Vienna, - - - -	104
41. Its secret articles, - - - -	ib.
42. Jealousy of Russia at the increase of the Grand-duchy from this treaty, - - - -	105

	Page
§ 43. Napoleon's secret views in this treaty, - - - - -	106
44. The ramparts of Vienna blown up, - - - - -	107
45. Affairs of the Tyrol after the armistice of Znaym, - - - - -	108
46. Fresh invasion of the Tyrol by Marshal Lefebvre, - - - - -	109
47. Renewed resolution of the Tyrolese to continue the contest, - - - - -	110
48. Desperate action at the bridge of Laditch, - - - - -	111
49. Defeat of Marshal Lefebvre on the Brenner, - - - - -	112
50. Successes in other quarters, - - - - -	113
51. Total defeat of Lefebvre at Innspruck, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
52. Hofer's deliverance and government of the Tyrol, - - - - -	115
53. Faults of his government, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
54. Preparations of Napoleon for the subjugation of the Tyrol, - - - - -	116
55. Successful invasion of the country on all sides, - - - - -	117
56. Hofer resolves to submit, and publishes a proclamation to that effect, - - - - -	118
57. Last invasion of the Tyrol, and desperate resistance, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
58. Final conquest of the country, - - - - -	119
59. Betrayal and seizure of Hofer, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
60. His trial and condemnation, - - - - -	120
61. His execution, - - - - -	121
62. Reflections on this event, - - - - -	122
63. Adventures of Haspinger and Spechbacher, - - - - -	123
64. Extraordinary adventure and escape of the latter, - - - - -	124
65. Affairs of the Holy See. Original causes of discontent on the part of the Pope at Napoleon, - - - - -	125
66. Dazzling reception of the Pope at Paris in 1805, but his request for the restoration of the marches is refused, - - - - -	126
67. Farther encroachments of France on the Holy See, - - - - -	127
68. Unshaken firmness of the Pope, - - - - -	128
69. Further demands of France, and refusal of the Pope, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
70. Renewed mutual irritations after the Peace of Tilsit, - - - - -	129
71. Entire assumption of the government by the French, - - - - -	130
72. Fresh outrages, and confinement of the Pope to his palace, - - - - -	131
73. Annexation of the Roman States to the French empire. Excommunication of Napoleon, - - - - -	132
74. Views of Napoleon in regard to the Pope, and his transference to Paris, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
75. Arrest of the Pope by Radet, - - - - -	133
76. Particulars of his seizure, - - - - -	134
77. The Pope is conducted to Grenoble, and Cardinal Pacca to the castle of Fenestrelles, - - - - -	135
78. Napoleon approves of the Pope's seizure, - - - - -	136
79. Thorough fusion of the Roman States with the French empire, - - - - -	137
80. Prejudicial effect of this measure on the independence of the Church, - - - - -	138
81. Vast and admirable works undertaken by the French at Rome, - - - - -	139
82. Immutability of the Roman Catholic Faith, - - - - -	141
83. Reflections on the spoliation of the Pope, as connected with Napoleon's subsequent reverses, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER LXI.

MARITIME WAR, AND CAMPAIGN OF 1809 IN ARAGON AND CATALONIA.

§ 1. Comparative military power of France and England at this period, - - -	143
2. Noble spirit which prevailed at this time in the British diplomatic engagements. Rejection of the proposals from Erfurth, - - - - -	144

CONTENTS.

v

	Page
§ 3. Treaty offensive and defensive between England and Spain, - - -	145
4. And with Sweden, - - - - -	146
5. Treaty between Great Britain and Turkey, - - -	147
6. Extension to which it led of British Continental commerce, - - -	ib.
7. Desponding views on the Peninsular contest which generally prevailed in Great Britain, - - - - -	148
8. Arguments of the Opposition against the Spanish war, - - -	149
9. Alleged advance of the means of continued resistance in Spain, - -	150
10. And error into which Sir John Moore had been led by Frère, - -	ib.
11. Answer of the Ministers in support of the Spaniards, - - -	151
12. Great successes already achieved, - - - - -	152
13. Absolute necessity to Spain of external aid, - - - - -	153
14. Defence of Sir John Moore's advance, - - - - -	ib.
15. The evacuation of the country had been done at the instance of Sir David Baird. Result of the debate, - - - - -	154
16. Light which these debates threw on the real errors of the campaign, -	155
17. The government resolve to support the Spanish war, and Sir A. Wellesley is sent out to Lisbon, - - - - -	156
18. Measures to increase the land forces, - - - - -	ib.
19. Budget, and naval and military forces of Britain, - - - - -	157
20. French expedition sails from Brest for Basque Roads, - - - - -	158
21. Position of the French in Basque Roads. An attack with fire-ships is resolved on, - - - - -	ib.
22. Preparations for the attack on the enemy in Basque Roads, - - -	159
23. Dreadful nocturnal attack, and destruction of the French fleet, - -	160
24. Attack on the ships ashore, and destruction of part of them, - -	161
25. Lord Cochrane advances unsupported, and gains partial success, - -	162
26. Proceedings which followed in England, - - - - -	ib.
27. Napoleon's opinion on this subject, - - - - -	163
28. Character of Lord Cochrane, - - - - -	164
29. His indiscretions lead unhappily to his disgrace, - - - - -	ib.
30. Capture of Martinique and St Domingo in the West Indies, - - -	165
31. And of the isle of Bourbon in the East, - - - - -	166
32. Reduction of the seven Ionian islands, - - - - -	ib.
33. Fruitless expedition of Sir J. Stuart against the coast of Naples, - -	167
34. Brilliant success of Lord Cpllingwood in the Mediterranean, - - -	168
35. State of affairs in Portugal, and forces of the Patriots at this period, -	169
36. And in Spain, - - - - -	ib.
37. Forces and distribution of the French in Spain, - - - - -	170
38. Effect in the Peninsula of the English treaty, and resolution to defend Portugal and stand by Spain, - - - - -	171
39. Preparations for the siege of Saragossa, - - - - -	172
40. Preparations which had been made for the defence of the place, - -	173
41. Preparatory dispositions of Palafox, - - - - -	174
42. Forces of the besiegers, and progress of the siege before the trenches were opened, - - - - -	175
43. Assault and fall of all the external fortified posts, - - - - -	ib.
44. Storming of the convents of Santa Engracia and the Capuchins in the ramparts, - - - - -	176
45. Obstinate defence of the town after the walls were taken, - - -	177
46. Slow progress of the assailants, - - - - -	178
47. Despair begins to spread among the French soldiers, - - -	179
48. Miseries to which the besieged were exposed from pestilence, - - -	ib.
49. Heroic deeds of the women of Saragossa, - - - - -	180
50. Able efforts and successes of Marshal Lannes on the left of the Ebro, -	181
51. Capitulation of Saragossa, - - - - -	182

	Page
§ 52. Terms of the capitulation, - - - - -	182
53. Hideous appearance of the town when surrendered. Losses on both sides, - - - - -	183
54. Cruel use which the French generals made of their victory, - - - - -	184
55. Submission of the whole of Aragon, - - - - -	185
56. Operations in Catalonia under St Cyr, - - - - -	186
57. Siege of Rosas, - - - - -	187
58. Attempts of the French for the relief of Barcelona, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
59. Battle of Cardaden and defeat of the Spaniards, - - - - -	188
60. Defeat of the Spaniards at Molinos del Rey, - - - - -	189
61. Reding's plan of a general attack on the enemy to clear the way for Saragossa, - - - - -	190
62. Defeat of the Spaniards at Igualada, - - - - -	191
63. Languid operations in Catalonia after this success, and retreat of St Cyr to the north of the province, - - - - -	192
64. Unsuccessful attempt on Barcelona, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
65. Renewal of the contest by Blake in Aragon, - - - - -	193
66. Suchet takes the command in Aragon. His early history, - - - - -	194
67. His progress as a general of division, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
68. His character, - - - - -	195
69. Defeat of the French at Alcaniz, - - - - -	196
70. Approach of Blake to Saragossa, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
71. Indecisive action at Maria close to Saragossa, - - - - -	197
72. Disgraceful rout of the Spaniards at Belchite, - - - - -	198
73. St Cyr's preparations for the siege of Gerona, - - - - -	199
74. Unfortunate supply of Barcelona with stores by sea, - - - - -	200
75. Preparations of the besieged for their defence, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
76. Description of Gerona, - - - - -	201
77. Progress of the siege, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
78. Fall of Monjuich, and obstinate conflicts of which it was the theatre, - - - - -	202
79. Efforts of the Spaniards for its relief, which are successful, - - - - -	203
80. Heroic constancy of the besieged, - - - - -	204
81. Repulse of the grand assault, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
82. Extreme distress of the besieged from want of provisions, - - - - -	205
83. Recall of St Cyr, and distress of the place, - - - - -	206
84. Capitulation of the town, and its fearful state, - - - - -	207
85. Extraordinary nature of its defence, - - - - -	208
86. Termination of the campaign in Catalonia, and aspect of affairs at that period in that quarter, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER LXII.

CAMPAIGN OF THE DOURO AND TALAVERA.

§ 1. State of Galicia and Asturias after the embarkation of the British at Corunna, - - - - -	210
2. Advance of Sir R. Wilson to Rodrigo, and return of Joseph to Madrid, - - - - -	211
3. Preparations for the invasion of Portugal by Soult and Victor, - - - - -	212
4. Soult's march through Galicia towards Oporto, - - - - -	213
5. And through Tras-os-Montes, - - - - -	214
6. Preparations for the defence of Oporto, - - - - -	215
7. Bloody action before that town, which is stormed, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
8. Operations by Ney in Galicia after Soult's departure, - - - - -	217

CONTENTS.

vii

	Page
§ 9. And of Kellerman in Asturias, - - - - -	217
10. Total defeat of the Spanish army of the centre at Ucles, - - - - -	218
11. Rout of the Spaniards at Ciudad Real, - - - - -	220
12. March of the army of Cuesta to Madellin, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
13. Their total rout there, - - - - -	221
14. Situation and views of Soult at Oporto at this period, - - - - -	222
15. Progress of the insurrection in Galicia and the north of Portugal, - - - - -	223
16. Extraordinary intrigues in Soult's army at this period, - - - - -	224
17. First measures of Wellington in Portugal, - - - - -	225
18. Deplorable state of Portugal when Wellington landed, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
19. Wellington's plan for the defence of Portugal, - - - - -	226
20. Great effect of these measures in Portugal, - - - - -	227
21. Reasons for operating first against Soult at Oporto, - - - - -	228
22. Marches against Soult, - - - - -	229
23. Passage of the Douro, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
24. Which is at length successfully effected, - - - - -	230
25. Early history of General Hill, - - - - -	231
26. His character, - - - - -	232
27. Soult's hazardous situation, - - - - -	233
28. His vigorous and able measures to extricate himself, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
29. His disastrous retreat and extreme danger, - - - - -	234
30. And narrow escape into Galicia, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
31. Wellington's preparations for operations in Estremadura, - - - - -	235
32. Great disorders of the British troops and their causes, - - - - -	236
33. Plan of a combined movement on Madrid, - - - - -	237
34. Preparations and forces of the French generals, - - - - -	238
35. Joseph advances towards Talavera, - - - - -	239
36. Description of the field of Talavera, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
37. Bloody action on the 27th of July, - - - - -	240
38. Repulse of the attack on the British left, - - - - -	241
39. Desperate battle on the 28th, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
40. Temporary suspension of the battle during the heat of the day, - - - - -	242
41. Heroic valour of the British on their right, - - - - -	243
42. Desperate charge of cavalry on the left, - - - - -	244
43. Imminent danger in the centre, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
44. And final victory, - - - - -	245
45. Results of the action, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
46. Great effect of this battle on public opinion in Europe, - - - - -	246
47. March of Soult, Ney, and Mortier, into Wellington's rear, - - - - -	247
48. Events in Galicia and Asturias which had led to this force assailing Wellington, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
49. Operations of Ney in the north, who evacuates Galicia, - - - - -	248
50. Wellington's plan to resist the attack, - - - - -	249
51. He marches against Soult, Ney, and Mortier, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
52. Cuesta abandons Talavera and the English wounded, - - - - -	250
53. The French generals separate their forces, - - - - -	251
54. Movements of the Allies after the separation of the French, - - - - -	252
55. Defeat of the Spaniards at Almonacid, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
56. Sufferings of the English army, and their return to the Portuguese frontier, - - - - -	253
57. Total inefficiency of the Spanish troops and authorities, - - - - -	254
58. Success of the Spaniards at Tamames, - - - - -	255
59. Events which led to the battle of Ocana, - - - - -	256
60. Position taken up by the Spanish general there, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
61. Total defeat of the Spaniards, - - - - -	257
62. Entire wreck of the Spanish army, - - - - -	258

	Page
§ 63. Rout of the Duke del Parque at Alba de Tormes, - - - -	258
64. Transfer of the British army to the frontier of Beira, - - - -	260
65. Disastrous state of the Spanish affairs at this period, - - - -	ib.
66. Reflections on the causes to which it had been owing, - - - -	261
67. Wellington's policy in consequence, - - - -	262
68. Difficulties with which he had to contend, and differences between the English and French method of carrying on war, - - - -	263
69. Effects of these on Wellington's military policy, - - - -	264
70. And ultimate results to the two parties, - - - -	ib.
71. Rashness and folly of the Spanish rulers, - - - -	265
72. Vast efforts of Great Britain during the campaign, - - - -	266
73. Comparison with what it was at the outset of the war, and has since become, - - - -	267
74. Extraordinary decline in the warlike forces of England since the peace, -	268
75. Probable effects of this change on the future fortunes of England, - -	269
76. The main cause of it is to be found in the democratic passion for economy, -	270

CHAPTER LXIII.

CAMPAIGN OF TORRES VEDRAS.

§ 1. Greatness of Napoleon's situation after the battle of Wagram, - - -	272
2. The want which he felt of heirs and historic descent, - - - -	273
3. Difficulties in the way of attaining these, - - - -	ib.
4. Different alliances which were the object of his choice, - - - -	274
5. Disclosure of the resolution for a divorce to Josephine at Fontainebleau, -	275
6. Speech of the Emperor on the occasion of the divorce, - - - -	276
7. Josephine's dignified answer, - - - -	277
8. Proposals made to the Emperor Alexander for an alliance with his sister, -	278
9. Difficulties with which they were met at the court of St Petersburg, -	279
10. Napoleon proposes to Marie Louise, and is accepted, - - - -	ib.
11. Journey of the Empress Marie Louise to Paris, - - - -	280
12. Singular breach of etiquette which took place when they met, - - - -	281
13. Pique of the Emperor Alexander on the occasion, - - - -	282
14. Vast importance of this resolution of Napoleon, - - - -	283
15. Character of Josephine, - - - -	284
16. Her weaknesses, - - - -	ib.
17. Character of Marie Louise, - - - -	285
18. Her faults, - - - -	ib.
19. Journey of the Emperor and Empress to Belgium, - - - -	286
20. Dreadful catastrophe at Prince Schwartzberg's ball, - - - -	287
21. Singular intrigue and fall of Fouché, - - - -	288
22. The first negotiation is discovered, - - - -	289
23. Fouché's disgrace is modified and he is made governor of Rome, - - -	ib.
24. Rupture with Louis Buonaparte, - - - -	290
25. Incorporation of Holland with the French empire, - - - -	291
26. Napoleon's public and private motives for this step, - - - -	292
27. Flight of Lucien Buonaparte to America, - - - -	293
28. General consternation in England at the results of the last campaign, -	294
29. Address of the city of London for an inquiry into the conduct of Wel- lington, - - - -	295
30. Extraordinary expressions in the petition of the common council of London, -	296
31. Argument of the Opposition against Wellington's campaign and the con- tinuance of the war in Spain, - - - -	297

CONTENTS.

ix

	Page
§ 32. Alleged bad generalship of Wellington, - - - - -	298
33. And his defective system of supply for the army, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
34. Ministers said to be the cause of these disasters, - - - - -	299
35. Answer of the administration in support of the war, - - - - -	300
36. The immediate results of the battle of Talavera, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
37. Unshaken resolution of the Spaniards, - - - - -	301
38. Reflections on this debate, - - - - -	303
39. Important effect which these gloomy views in England had on the conduct of the French government, - - - - -	304
40. Resolutions of parliament, and supplies of the year, - - - - -	305
41. Preparations of Napoleon for the campaign in Spain, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
42. Prodigious extortions and contributions in Spain, by which this immense force was maintained, - - - - -	306
43. Preparations for the invasion of Andalusia by the French, - - - - -	307
44. Forcing of the passes of the Sierra Morena, - - - - -	308
45. Conquest of Andalusia and Grenada, - - - - -	309
46. Rapid and able march of Albuquerque, - - - - -	310
47. Which saves Cadiz, - - - - -	311
48. Operations in Catalonia. Suchet's failure before Valencia, - - - - -	312
49. Fall of Hostalrich, the garrison of which cuts its way through the besiegers, - - - - -	313
50. Siege of Lerida, and action at Margalef, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
51. Fall of Lerida, - - - - -	314
52. Atrocious cruelty by which the citadel was taken, - - - - -	315
53. Fall of Mequinenza, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
54. Disasters and recall of Augereau in Catalonia, - - - - -	316
55. Wellington's views on the incapacity of the Spaniards, - - - - -	317
56. His plan for the defence of Portugal, and the ultimate deliverance of the Peninsula, - - - - -	318
57. Extraordinary difficulties to which Wellington was exposed, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
58. Inefficiency and weakness of the Portuguese government, - - - - -	320
59. Magnanimous resolution of Wellington to discharge his duty in the face of all clamour, - - - - -	321
60. Preparations for the grand attack on Portugal by Massena, May, 1810, - - - - -	322
61. Force of Wellington for the defence of Portugal, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
62. Siege and fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, - - - - -	323
63. Combat on the Coa, - - - - -	324
64. Siege and fall of Almeida, - - - - -	325
65. Retreat of Wellington into the interior of Portugal, - - - - -	326
66. He crosses the Mondego, and takes post at Busaco, - - - - -	327
67. Night before the battle of Busaco, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
68. Battle of Busaco, - - - - -	328
69. Bloody defeat of the French, - - - - -	329
70. Important results of this battle, - - - - -	330
71. Massena turns the British left, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
72. Wellington retires to Torres Vedras, - - - - -	331
73. Description of the lines of Torres Vedras, - - - - -	332
74. Junction of Romana, and favourable position of the British army, - - - - -	333
75. Continued distresses of the French, - - - - -	334
76. Who at length retreat, - - - - -	335
77. Position of the French at Santarem, - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
78. Wellington declines to attack him, and Massena at length retires, - - - - -	336
79. Operations of Soult in Estremadura, - - - - -	337
80. Total defeat of Mendizabel at the Gebora, - - - - -	339
81. Siege and fall of Badajoz, - - - - -	340
82. Operations before Cadiz, - - - - -	341

	Page
§ 83. Battle of Barrosa, - - - - -	341
84. Victory of the English, - - - - -	342
85. Who, however, re-enter the walls of Cadiz, - - - - -	343
86. Massena's skilful system of retreat, - - - - -	ib.
87. Various actions during the retreat, - - - - -	344
88. Continuation of the retreat to the frontier, - - - - -	345
89. Action at Sabugal, and vast losses during the retreat, - - - - -	ib.
90. Blockade of Almeida, and efforts of Massena for its relief, - - - - -	346
91. First combat of Fuentes d'Onore, - - - - -	347
92. Battle of Fuentes d'Onore, - - - - -	348
93. Obstinate nature of the fight, - - - - -	349
94. Steady retreat of the British centre and right, - - - - -	350
95. Massena's ultimate failure, - - - - -	ib.
96. Massena's evacuation of Almeida, and his retreat, - - - - -	351
97. Barbarous conduct of the French during the retreat, - - - - -	352
98. Reflections on these shocking barbarities, - - - - -	353
99. Noble qualities evinced by the Portuguese peasantry, - - - - -	ib.
100. Grant by parliament, and subscriptions in England for their relief, - - - - -	354
101. Vast effect produced by this campaign over Europe, - - - - -	355
102. And especially in Great Britain, - - - - -	ib.
103. Error of Napoleon in the campaign, and its cause, - - - - -	356
104. Views of government on the campaign, - - - - -	357
105. Their noble resolution to prolong the contest if driven from Lisbon, - - - - -	ib.
106. Magnanimous principles by which Wellington was guided, - - - - -	358
107. The steady discharge of duty was his ruling principle, - - - - -	ib.
Appendix, - - - - -	361

HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER LIX.

CAMPAIGN OF WAGRAM.

BOTH the military and political position of Napoleon was now full of peril ; and it was obvious to all the world, that a single false step, one additional defeat, would expose him to certain ruin. But it was precisely in such circumstances that his genius shone forth with the brightest lustre, and that he was most likely by a sudden blow to reinstate his affairs, and overturn all the calculations of his enemies. No man ever saw so clearly where was the decisive point of the campaign, or so firmly made up his mind to relinquish all minor advantages, in order to accumulate his forces upon that vital quarter where defeat to his antagonists would prove certain ruin. In doing so, he followed the natural bent of his genius, which was never inclined to owe to combination what could be effected by audacity : but he was powerfully aided by the despotic nature of the authority which he wielded, and the irresponsible character of the command with which he was invested ; for many other generals might have seen equally clearly the policy of concentrating all their strength for a blow at the heart of their adversary's power, without possessing either the power to effect such a concentration, or the independence of others

CHAP.

LIX.

1809.

1.

Views and
policy of Na-
poleon at this
juncture.

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

necessary to incur its responsibility. In the present instance, he saw at once that the vital point of the war was to be found under the walls of Vienna; and that, if he could succeed in defeating the Archduke Charles on the plain of the Marchfeld, he need not disquiet himself either about the victories of the Tyrolese in their Alpine valleys, the insurrection of the Germans on the banks of the Elbe, or the distant thunder of the English on the shores of the Scheldt. Fixing all his attention, therefore, upon the restoration of the bridges, the concentration of his forces, and the re-animating of his soldiers in the centre, he gave himself little concern about the tardy movements of the coalition upon the vast circumference of the theatre of hostilities; and wrote to his lieutenants only to keep open the communications of the Grand Army with the Rhine, and he would soon find the means of dissipating the host of enemies who were now accumulating round his extremities.^{1*}

† Pel. iv. 76,
77. Sav. iv.
94. Jom. lii.
246, 247.

2.
Forces of
Napoleon in
the island of
Lobau.
May 25.

The force which remained at the disposal of the French Emperor, even after the very serious losses of the battle of Aspern, was still immense. The chasms produced by that disastrous engagement had been more than supplied by the opportune arrival of Eugène's army at the Imperial headquarters; while the corresponding forces of the Archduke John were, for the time at least, lost to the Austrian generals by that prince having retreated to the Hungarian plains, instead of obeying his instructions and menacing the French communications from the Tyrolese mountains.† From the confidential correspondence of Napoleon with Berthier at this period, which has since been published, it appears that, in the beginning of June, the Grand Army numbered, present with the eagles, no less than one hundred and ten thousand infantry, and twenty-four thousand horse, with four hundred pieces of cannon: in all, including the artillerymen, mustering at least a hundred and fifty thousand comba-

* On the 6th June, Napoleon wrote from Schœnbrunn to Marshal Kellerman, who commanded the army of reserve in the north of Germany. "Before the enemy can have accomplished any thing of essential importance in Saxony, the Emperor will have passed the Danube, and be on their rear. But a corps which should approach the line of communication of the Grand Army might really prove dangerous: far more so than any thing which could occur in the north of Germany."—*NAPOLÉON to KELLERMAN, June 6, 1809; PELET, iv. 77, 78.*

† *Ante, chap. liii. § 25.*

tants. This was independent of the corps of Marmont in Dalmatia, of Vandamme in echelon in the rear towards Bavaria, of Lefebvre in the Tyrol, and of Macdonald in Styria. After making every deduction for the portions of these different corps which might be requisite to keep open the rear, and maintain the communications, at least fifty thousand men might be ordered up to support the Grand Army : and thus, after deducting for the sick and absent, a hundred and eighty thousand men could be assembled in a month's time under the walls of Vienna, of whom thirty thousand were cavalry, with six hundred pieces of cannon : a greater force, if the quality and equipment of the troops is taken into consideration, than had ever in the world before been assembled in a single battle. Nor was this all : immediately in their rear they had a fortified capital amply stored with provisions, and containing abundant supplies of all sorts for the use of the army ; and the great arsenal of the Austrian monarchy, overflowing with artillery, arms, ammunition, pontoons, and every species of equipment that could be desired for the most extensive military operations.¹

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Pel. iv. 77.
78. Jom. lii.
246. Stat.
233, 236.

The inhabitants of the other countries of Europe, electrified by the intelligence of the battle of Aspern, and the retreat of the French army into the island of Lobau, entertained the most sanguine hopes that they would immediately be assailed there by the victorious Austrians, and either driven to the right bank of the Danube, and forced to evacuate the capital, or compelled to lay down their arms in that crowded and untenable position. Possibly, if the Archduke Charles had been aware of the magnitude of the losses which the French army had sustained, and the almost total exhaustion of their ammunition, he might, on the day after the battle, have made good a descent upon the island, and achieved the most glorious success. Such an enterprise, however, would at best have been attended with considerable hazard ; for, although the French actually in the island on the morning after the battle did not exceed forty thousand men, yet an equal force was under the command of Davoust on the right bank around Vienna, and thirty thousand more under Vandamme and Bernadotte were only a few marches in the rear from St Polten to Lintz. On the other hand, the

3.
Forces and
views of the
Archduke
Charles at
the same
juncture.

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

Imperialists, exhausted by the fatigues of a battle of two days' duration of unexampled severity, and weakened by the loss of nearly twenty-five thousand killed and wounded in the strife, were too happy to have escaped without destruction from so dreadful a contest, to think of immediately recommencing active operations. The force at the command of the Archduke, though rapidly augmenting, was not at first, after the battle, very considerable. Fifty thousand of the warriors who had borne a part in the glorious strife, alone remained unhurt; Kollowrath might soon bring up twenty thousand more from Lintz; and when the fatal detour of the Archduke John was completed, he, it was hoped, would be able to add thirty thousand veteran troops from the Hungarian plains. Thus a hundred thousand regular troops, of which about twenty thousand were cavalry, might be reckoned on for the great battle which was to decide the fate of the monarchy; and, as this force would probably be swelled by fifty thousand landwehr, or reserves from the eastern and northern provinces of the monarchy, before the end of June, the forces on the opposite sides were not materially different, so far as numerical strength went. And even the superior number of regular and veteran soldiers in the French ranks might be considered as compensated by the advantage which the German host derived from

¹ Pel. iv. 78, the homogeneous quality of its troops, the animation and Appen-
dix, table 2d. with which they were inspired in behalf of their country,
Vict. et Conq. and the enthusiasm which they generally felt at the
xix. 127.
Jom. iii. 245. glorious result of the late memorable battle in which they had been engaged.¹

4.
Napoleon's
projects for
crossing the
Danube.

While remaining in a state of apparent inactivity at Schœnbrunn, Napoleon's attention was chiefly directed to three objects. First, the converting the island of Lobau into a vast fortress, rendered impregnable to attack by a plentiful array of heavy artillery, and connected with the right bank by strong bridges, from whence he might at any moment issue forth to attack the Archduke Charles, and at the same time find a secure refuge in case of disaster. Next, the securing and keeping open his communication with the Rhine, by means of a chain of posts, occupied by strong detachments, and a skilful disposition of the troops of the Rhenish Confederacy, under Lefebvre, Bernadotte,

and Vandamme, all along the menaced districts in the valley of the Danube. Lastly, the clearing his right flank of the enemy, driving the Archduke John still farther into the Hungarian plains, and throwing back upon the left flank the corps which the Austrian generalissimo was pushing forward to endeavour to open up a communication with the Italian army. To accomplish these various objects, however, and at the same time retain a sufficient number of troops at headquarters to keep the great and rapidly increasing army of the Archduke Charles in check, required an immense accumulation of forces. Every effort, therefore, was made to strengthen the Grand Army. Mar-mont received orders to hasten his march from Dalmatia with his whole corps; Macdonald, with his numerous divisions of the Italian army, was directed to advance from Styria; and the most pressing instructions were sent to the rear to order up every man and horse that could be spared from the depots and garrisons in the interior, to the headquarters of the Grand Army.^{1*}

The works in the island of Lobau were of the most gigantic description, and still remain an enduring monument of the great designs of the Emperor Napoleon, and the persevering energy and skill of his engineers. Never, since the days of the Romans, had constructions so vast been erected in the field in presence of the enemy. Three solid bridges connected that important island with the right bank of the Danube; and, in addition to this, a fourth, which ran across all the islands from shore to shore, over an extent of two hundred and forty fathoms. The most extraordinary pains were taken to render this bridge secure against the misfortune which had befallen the former one. Immediately above the bridge of boats was one on piles, which served as a barrier both against the violence of the current, and the machinations of the enemy; and close adjoining to it on the other side, one on pontoons, which also contributed to the strength of the whole, and served as an additional line of passage for the columns of infantry and light chariots. Both extremities

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Pel. iv. 77,
78. Stut. 240,
242. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
126.

5.
Prodigious
works exe-
cuted in the
island of
Lobau by the
French
Emperor.

* To such perfection were the movements of these distant and numerous bodies brought, that on each despatch was marked the hour and minute when the courier set out, with the hour when the troops were required to be at the general rendezvous in the island of Lobau; and they all arrived, many from the distance of some hundred miles, at the precise time assigned to them.—SAVARY, iv. 99.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

of these bridges were fortified by strong *têtes-du-pont* : that on the northern extremity, where it was exposed to the attacks of the enemy, soon became a complete fortress, with rampart, wet ditches, ravelins, and lunettes, armed with eighty pieces of heavy cannon, drawn from the arsenal of Vienna. All the prominent points of the intermediate islands were also fortified and mounted with artillery ; and boats were collected and manned by marines brought from Brest by the provident foresight of the Emperor, before the opening of the campaign, to be in readiness to intercept and turn aside any fire-ships or loaded barks that might be directed against the bridge by the enemy. The Emperor was indefatigable in urging forward these important operations. Every day, for the first fortnight, he was to be seen in the island of Lobau, animating the men, conversing with the engineers directing the works ; and such was the vigour which his presence and exertions inspired into his followers, that, in a fortnight after the battle of Aspern, the fortifications were beyond the reach of the enemy's attack, and in a month they were entirely finished.^{1*}

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xix
1809. Fel. iv.
79, 80. Sav.
iv. 98, 99

6.
Hidden real
designs of the
Emperor as
to the point
of passage.

Immense as these preparations were, it was not to them alone that the Emperor trusted for the grand operation of crossing the river. He was well aware that such gigantic works would speedily fix the attention of the enemy ; and he daily beheld rising before his eyes, vast intrenchments running through Essling and Enzersdorf, by which the Austrians hoped to bar the entrance to the Marchfeld from the bridge, and confine the enemy within the fortifications they had constructed. Like the vast armament of armed gun-boats, collected in 1805, on the shores of the Channel, these great operations were intended only to mask his hidden designs, and conceal from the enemy the real point of attack. While these prodigious bridges and

* During this momentous period, the care of the Emperor extended in an especial manner to the comfort and interests of his soldiers. Walking one day with his marshals on the shores of the isle of Lobau, he passed a company of grenadiers seated at their dinner. "Well, my friends," said Napoleon, "I hope you find the wine good." "It will not make us drunk," replied one of their number ; "there is our cellar," pointing to the Danube. The Emperor, who had ordered a distribution of a bottle of wine to each man, was surprised, and promised an immediate inquiry. Berthier instantly set it on foot, and it turned out that forty thousand bottles sent by the Emperor a few days before for the army, had been purloined and sold by the commissaries. They were immediately brought to trial, and condemned to be shot.—*Victoires et Conquêtes*, xix. 201.

fortifications attracted all the attention of the Austrians to the anticipated passage in front of Essling, there were secretly collected in one of the narrow channels behind the island of Lobau, in a situation entirely concealed from the enemy, the materials for three other bridges over the narrow arm of the river which separated that island from the northern bank, and which were so constructed that they could be transported and put together with extraordinary celerity. One of these bridges was composed of a single piece, sixty fathoms in length; the second, of the materials of the old bridge which had given way on the 22d May, reconstructed with more skill; the third, of boats and pontoons drawn from the arsenal of Vienna. The first of these bridges was justly considered so wonderful a piece of art, that a model of it is still preserved in Paris, in the hall of the Conservatory of Objects of Art. The intention of the Emperor was, that these bridges should be thrown across the arm of the Danube which separates Lobau from the opposite shore, considerably farther down than the great bridge in front of Essling, and in such a situation as to take all the Austrian defences in rear. Thus the three fixed bridges from the southern bank to the island of Lobau, secured the passage of the troops and artillery into that important station; the great bridge from thence to the *tête-du-pont*, on the northern bank, attracted all the attention of the enemy to that point, while the movable bridges, prepared in secret in the channels behind, were adapted to throw the troops speedily across, in a situation where they were not expected, and where they would find themselves in the rear of the whole Austrian intrenchments. To cover the latter design, and at the same time distract the attention of the enemy, preparations as if for a passage were made both at Nussdorf and Spitz, on the upper part of the river above the islands; while the whole semicircular shore of the island of Lobau, fronting the northern bank, was lined with heavy artillery drawn from the arsenal of Vienna, and a hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, disposed on every headland along the wide circumference, were prepared to cover the formation of the new bridges, and bewilder the Imperialists by their wide-extended fire.¹

. While Napoleon was engaged in these great under-

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Sav. iv. 39.
Pol. iv. 79.
83 Stat. 240,
246.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

7.
Defensive
preparations
of the Aus-
trians.

takings, the Austrians on their part were not idle. Directly opposite to the end of the main bridge, where the attack was anticipated, the Archduke Charles erected a vast line of intrenchments, which, running from Aspern across the former field of battle and through Essling, terminated in the banks of the Danube at Enzersdorf. These immense works, consisting of field redoubts and ravelins, united by a curtain, were strengthened by palisades all along their front, and armed with a hundred and fifty pieces of heavy artillery. The bulk of the Austrian army was stationed about a league in the rear, along the course of the little stream, the Russbach, which provided water for the prodigious multitude. Tranquil behind his formidable intrenchments, the Archduke quietly awaited the course of events; while his army hourly received accessions of strength, and improved in discipline and efficiency. The veterans recovered from their fatigues, burnished their arms, and instructed the young soldiers, who were daily flocking to the camp, in the rudiments of the military art: the chasms in the cavalry and artillery were filled up by numerous supplies from Hungary and Transylvania, where vast public establishments for the breeding of horses had been brought to the highest perfection;* the wounded in great numbers rejoined their ranks; the artillery was augmented to a degree hitherto unheard-of in war; and, before the end of June, a hundred and forty thousand men, of whom twenty-five thousand were splendid cavalry, with seven hundred pieces of cannon, were assembled round the Austrian standards, all animated by their recent victory with a degree of spirit and enthusiasm never before witnessed in the Imperial armies.¹

¹ Stat. 252,
288. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
197, 198.
Pel. iv. 82,
83.

8.
Efforts of
Napoleon to
clear his
rear and
flanks.

The situation of the respective parties required that the principal attention of the French should be turned to the preservation of their communications clear with the Rhine, and of the Germans to the maintenance of their connexion with the eastern provinces of the empire, where the forces of the monarchy were still untouched,

* A very interesting account of these vast establishments is given in the first volume of Marshal Marmont's *Travels in Hungary and Turkey*, a work which proves that that veteran commander unites the eye of an experienced observer to the warmth of a philanthropist and the judgment of a practical statesman.—See MARMONT, *Voyage dans l'Orient*, i. 232, and ii. 116.

and the great armament called the Hungarian insurrection was daily acquiring a more complete consistency. For this purpose, Napoleon issued the most pressing orders to Bourcier and Rouyer to reopen, with all the forces of the Confederation which they could assemble, the great road to the Rhine, and, neglecting all minor objects, to concentrate their whole troops upon that vital line of communication. At the same time Kellerman, who was soon afterwards succeeded by Junot, was directed to strain every nerve for the accumulation of an imposing force, under the denomination of the Army of Observation of the Elbe, at Frankfort, and drive the Imperialists from their threatening positions at Bayreuth and Nuremberg. These directions were promptly obeyed. Early in July, Junot July 2 advanced into Franconia and Saxony on the one side, while Jerome, relieved by the destruction of Schill's corps from domestic danger, threatened them on the other. The Duke of Brunswick, with the Austrian commanders, was obliged to retire into the Bohemian mountains; while Augsburg and Ratisbon were retaken by the national guards of Wirtemberg and Baden, and the line of communication both with Strasburg and Frankfort was reopened to the Grand Army.¹

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

More important operations followed the attempts of the Austrians to regain, by the circuitous route of Presburg and the east, their communication with the Archduke John and the Hungarian insurrection. The Archduke Charles occupied, with the corps of Bianchi, the town of Presburg, situated six leagues below Vienna; on the left bank of the river, with a *tête-du-pont* commanding the bridge at that place over the Danube. Desirous of dislodging the enemy from this important post, which gave them the means of manœuvring on both banks of the river, and of turning his right flank, Napoleon directed Davoust to march against it. He found the *tête-du-pont* unfinished, and his troops tried to carry it by a *coup-de-main*: but the sustained fire of the Austrian works repulsed them with loss; while the arm of the Danube, June 3. twenty toises in breadth, which separated them from the isles occupied by the Imperialists, flowing in a rapid current, rendered it impossible for them to dislodge the enemy from his advanced posts in the river. However,

July 7.
¹ Pel. iv. 83,
89. Jom. iii.
246. Stut.
260, 262.

9.
The French
are checked
in their at-
tempts to
force a pas-
sage at Pres-
burg.

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.
¹ Pel. iv. 87,
89. Jom. ii.
246. Stint.
246, 248.

by occupying in force with two strong divisions the village of Engerau, immediately opposite to the southern extremity of the bridge, he rendered the possession of it unavailing to his antagonists; and soon after, the rapid succession of more important events in other quarters, deprived this point of the importance which apparently belonged to it.¹

10.
Retreat of the
Archduke
John to
Raab, and
position
which he took
up there.

June 13.

The Archduke John, in retiring from Carniola into Hungary, had taken with him part of the landwehr of that province, and detached Giulay into Croatia, where it was hoped he could maintain himself, lest these detached bodies should fall into the enemy's hands, who had now overrun Carniola. With these forces united to his own, he retired to Kormond in Hungary, which is on the right bank of the Danube; so that he was in the disadvantageous situation of being separated by that river from the main Austrian army, and exposed to any accumulations of force which Napoleon, on his side of the river, might choose to direct against him. He had the advantage, however, of having the communication open in his rear with the reinforcements which were expected from the Hungarian insurrection; and, in the middle of June, he formed a junction with his brother the Archduke Palatine, who commanded that irregular force, at RAAB. Their united forces amounted to twenty-two thousand regular troops, and eighteen thousand of the insurrection; and they took post in a strong position, on the ridges which lie in front of that town. Their right rested on the village of Szabadhegy, and the heights of the same name; their left was covered by a morass; their centre ran through the farm of Kismeyger; numerous light horse were disposed along the front of the line, while a thousand chosen troops occupied a square stone edifice still farther in advance of the centre, which was loopholed, and strengthened by a few works, besides a deep rivulet, which formed a sort of natural fosse to the post. In this position, the Archduke John resolved to give battle to the enemy, under Eugene Beauharnais, who were now coming up in great strength from the west; although he had just received a despatch from his brother, the generalissimo, containing the sage instructions, by no means to fight in the open plain, but to throw himself into the

intrenched camp in his rear, under the cannon of Raab; to blend the inexperienced levies with the veteran troops, and accustom them to military discipline before he trusted them against the enemy; to keep open his communication with the main army at Essling, and detach seven thousand men to Presburg for that purpose; and to fight only in the event of the enemy forcing the passage of the Raab, and menacing the left of the intrenched camp. These wise counsels and express injunctions were alike disregarded; the officers of the Archduke John's staff being unwilling to forego the brilliant results which they anticipated from a battle, and he himself reluctant, by placing his force under the immediate direction of his brother, to lose the lustre of a separate command.

The day following, being the 14th June, was the anniversary of the battle of Marengo: the Viceroy was naturally anxious to combat on that auspicious day, and the Austrian generals made no attempt to frustrate his designs. At ten o'clock the signal for battle was given, and the French advanced with enthusiasm to the attack. Grenier commanded the centre; Baraguay D'Hilliers the left; Montbrun, with the light cavalry, and Grouchy, with the heavy dragoons, were on the right; Pacthod, with his numerous division was in reserve, behind the centre and left. Eugene formed his troops in columns of division in echelon, the right in advance; but, before the action had become serious, that order was abandoned by the rapid advance of the centre and left, and the battle became general in parallel lines. His forces were about thirty-five thousand in number, inferior by five thousand to those of the enemy; but this disadvantage was more than compensated by the experienced character of the men, while nearly half of those opposed to them were raw levies or volunteers who had never encountered a hostile fire. The first troops which came into action were those of Serras, which attacked the square building in advance of Kismeyger. The Austrians were speedily driven within the walls; but there they made a desperate resistance, and, while numbers of the assailants fell under the fatal fire from the loopholes, others sank in the deep marshes of the rivulet, which on three sides encircled the building. In a few minutes seven hundred men perished in this

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Pel. iv. 50,
95. Jom. iv.
7, 248.
Vict. et
Conq. xix.
172, 173.
Stat. 250, 255.

11
Battle of
Raab
June 14

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

1 19th Bull.
Moult. 23d
June 1809.
Viot. et
Conq. xix.
175, 176.
Jom. iii. 248,
249. Folet,
iv. 95, 106.

12.
Varied suc-
cess, but
final victory
of the Vice-
roy.

disastrous manner, without one of the defences of the place being carried by the assailants. While success was thus arrested around this formidable post, the village of Kismeyger in its rear was menaced by Durutte, who, with a chosen division of infantry, had advanced through the open ground between its houses and the buildings of Szabadhegy, and had already got abreast of the former. But he was there met by the fire of a battery of twelve pieces, the grape-shot from which made wide chasms in his line; and the Austrians, profiting by the hesitation occasioned by this unexpected discharge, made a vigorous onset, which drove back the whole centre in disorder; while at the same time, Baraguay D'Hilliers, with his Italian division on the left, checked by the murderous fire which issued from the village of Szabadhegy, was also forced to give ground, and already the cries of victory were heard along the whole of that part of the Austrian line.¹

Eugene saw that the decisive moment had arrived, and he hastened to the spot to arrest the disorder. He instantly addressed a few words to the flying Italians, exhorted them to remember their victories and their glory, and, what was still more to the purpose, brought forward the reserve, under General Pacthod, consisting almost entirely of French troops, to their support. The arrival of these veterans changed the face of the day.

* The Italians, reanimated by this seasonable support, returned to the charge; the centre and right of the enemy were forced, and Szabadhegy was carried. Upon this the Archduke John brought up his reserve, consisting of the flower of his army; Szabadhegy was recaptured, and the Italians driven back in confusion. Again Durutte and Pacthod made good their entrance, and a third time the Imperialists expelled them at the point of the bayonet. In following up this last attack, however, the Hungarian new levies extended themselves too far, deeming victory secure, and thinking to outflank their opponents. The experienced French generals saw their error, and returned to the charge with their troops in column, carried, and finally retained the village which had been so obstinately contested, and threw the whole centre and right of the enemy into confusion. Meanwhile a furious combat of horse was going forward on the Austrian left, where Montbrun

and Grouchy were opposed to the whole weight of the Hungarian horse. This formidable body of cavalry, seven thousand strong, in the first instance overwhelmed Montbrun and his division, who had advanced to support the brigade of Colbert, which was endeavouring to turn the square farm-house in front, which still prolonged its defence. But Grouchy came up with his terrible cuirassiers, and charged the enemy, when blown by their pursuit, with such vigour, that they were driven back so far as to leave the heroic defenders of that now isolated post entirely to their own resources.¹

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

Vict. et
Conq. xix.
175, 176.
Pel. iv. 97,
99. Jom. iii.
248, 249.
Stat. 258,
264. Monit.
23d June.

Though thus left in the middle, as it were, of the French army, Hammel and the heroic defenders of the farm-house abated nothing of their resolution. Irritated at this prolonged opposition, Serras prepared a new attack: he himself, with his whole division, assailed it on one side, while Roussel, with a fresh brigade, recommenced the attack in front. Nothing could resist this last assault: surrounded on all sides, the walls of the building were carried by escalade, the doors cut down by redoubled strokes of the hatchet, and the infuriated soldiery rushed into the building. A frightful massacre began. In the tumult the beams took fire, the flames spread with extraordinary rapidity, and, amidst the death-struggle between the French and Austrians, the roof fell in with a tremendous crash, and all within, friends and foes, perished. This decisive success established Eugene in a solid manner in the village of Kismeyger and centre of the enemy, who now fought only to secure his retreat. It was conducted with more order than could have been expected after so desperate a struggle, and the Archduke took refuge under the cannon of Komorn, abandoning the intrenched camp of Raab, which was immediately evacuated by some battalions of the Hungarian insurrection, by whom it was occupied. In this disastrous contest the Archduke John lost six thousand men, of whom above three thousand were made prisoners, and two pieces of cannon. The loss of the French was not more than half that amount; for, though those who fell were nearly as numerous, they lost few prisoners.²

13.
Defeat and
losses of the
Austrians.

Vict. et
Conq. xix.
175, 180
Jom. iii. 249.
Pel. iv. 102,
103. Stat.
262, 264.

The battle of Raab, notwithstanding its calamitous result, was in the highest degree honourable to the troops

- CHAP. of the Hungarian insurrection, who composed so large a
 LIX. portion of the Imperial army, and who, though brought
 1808. into fire for the first time, for hours disputed the palm of
 14. victory with veteran soldiers. It was attended, however,
 Siege and capture of Raab. by very disastrous consequences. Not only was the moral
 impression of the battle of Aspern sensibly weakened by
 the loss of the very next serious engagement which took
 place between the two powers, but the force of the Hun-
 garian insurrection was irrecoverably broken by the ill
 success of its first essay in arms, and the loss of the fortress
 and intrenched camp of Raab, which shortly after took
 place. The latter was evacuated immediately after the
 battle; the former shortly after besieged by Lauriston,
 June 24. with heavy cannon drawn from the arsenal of Vienna,
 and taken, with its garrison of two thousand men, chiefly
 militia. The possession of this fortress, though armed
 only with eighteen guns, was a material advantage to the
 French, not only as depriving the enemy of a fortified
 post on the right bank of the Danube, from which they
 would probably have derived important advantages in the
 progress of the campaign, but as destroying the shelter of
 the intrenched camp where the Hungarian insurrection
 might have been further trained in the military art, and
 brought to render the most valuable service as light troops
 to the regular forces; while it gave a solid *point d'appui* to
 the right flank of Napoleon, and put it in his power to call
 up almost the whole force of Eugene to his own standard,
 in the decisive action which was approaching on the
 plains of the Marchfeld.¹
- 1 21st Bull. While these important events were securing the right
 Mont. June wing of the French army in the Hungarian plains, Mar-
 30, 1809. mont and Macdonald, after severally overcoming every
 Jom. in. 251. obstacle, were rapidly approaching with the reserves from
 Vict. et the Dalmatian shores and the mountains of Styria. The
 Conq. xix. first of these generals, who had remained in command of
 179, 180. the Illyrian provinces ever since the treaty of Tilsit, found
 Pol. iv. 103, himself, in the early part of the campaign, entirely isolated
 104, 142. from the French armies by the advance of the Archduke
 John through Carniola and Styria to the banks of the
 Adige. In the end of April, the Austrian general Stoicke-
 wisch had been detached by that prince with eight thou-
 sand men to aid the insurrectionary movements which
- 15 Operations of Marmont and Macdonald in Illyria and Carnathia.
- April 23.

were preparing in the mountains of Dalmatia against the French authorities ; and some skirmishes had taken place between the advanced posts of the opposite parties, in which the Imperialists had the advantage, and they had already descended from the hills, and made themselves masters of a considerable extent of sea-coast, including the fort of Lusin Picolo, which brought them into contact with the English cruisers in the Adriatic, when the intelligence of the retreat of the Archduke from Italy, and the near approach of Macdonald by Laybach towards their line of communication with Austria, rendered it necessary to commence a retreat. Marmont lost no time in following the retiring corps of the enemy, and a severe action took place on the 23d, on the banks of the Lika, without any decisive advantage to either party. In obedience to the orders they had received, the Imperialists continued their retreat ; and Marmont, being now summoned up with his whole corps to the support of the Grand Army, pressed on in pursuit. A few days after, he arrived at Fiume, which was entered without opposition, and remained there two days to rest his troops after the laborious mountain marches they had undergone. On the 3d June he entered Laybach, which was evacuated on his approach ; while the corps of Giulay and Chastellar, which had abandoned the Tyrol by orders from the Archduke John, in order to the concentration of the forces of the monarchy in its vitals, were painfully, and by cross roads, traversing the mountains in his front, in their march towards Gratz and the Hungarian plains.¹

These retiring generals had a most perilous task to perform in their march eastward through Styria and Carniola, where Marmont, established at Laybach, was ready to fall perpendicularly on their flank ; and Macdonald, who was hastening up from Villach in Carinthia, on the traces of Eugene, threatened their rear. It appeared almost impossible that they could escape so many dangers : but such was the skill of the Imperial commanders, and the activity of their troops, that they not only extricated themselves without any serious loss from this hazardous situation, but very nearly inflicted an important blow upon their opponents. Chastellar, obliged to evacuate the Tyrol, had descended the valley of the Drave, and

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

April 26, 27.

May 3.

May 14

May 23.

May 28.

¹ Pel. iv. 108,
117. Jom. iii.
253, 254.
Barth. 264,
267.

16.
Extraordi-
nary difficul-
ties which
Giulay and
Chastellar
encountered.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.
June 1.

¹ Pol. iv. 117.
119. Jom. iii.
254. Erz.
Johan. Feld.
232, 237.
Vlot. et
Conq. xix.
183.

assembled his troops at Villach ; from thence he made a demonstration against Klagenfurth, where the Italian general Rusca had collected a few battalions ; and after some sharp fighting he reached the right bank of the Drave, and succeeded, by throwing that river between him and his pursuers, in extricating himself from the dangers that threatened him. He would have been utterly destroyed if Marmont had been a little more expeditious in his movements ; for had that general arrived two days sooner at Nakles, where the two roads from Klagenfurth and Villach unite, he would have occupied the only route by which the enemy could have descended the Drave ; and if Chastellar had thrown himself across the mountains into the defiles of the Muhr, he would have fallen into the hands of Macdonald, who was descending the rocky banks of that romantic stream. But every thing in war depends upon precision of calculation and rapidity of movement, and the most active and vigilant generals are frequently ignorant of what is passing on the enemy's part, within a few leagues of their headquarters.¹

17.
Operations of
Giulay in
Carniola and
Styria.
May 3.

June 3.

June 15.

Giulay, whose corps formed part of the army of the Archduke John, had been detached by that prince with seventeen thousand regular troops into Croatia, of which he was the Ban, to raise the landwehr of that warlike province and of Carniola, and await ulterior orders. Subsequently, the disasters and continued retreat of the Italian army rendered it necessary for the Archduke to recall him to his standards ; and Giulay had turned to such good account the few weeks which he had spent in his province, that he was prepared now to take the field at the head of twenty thousand men, of whom eight thousand were regulars. With this imposing force he broke up in the beginning of June from Ram and Agram on the Saave, and began his march northward for Marburg, with the design of joining the Archduke, whom he conceived to be still at Gratz in Styria. He moved, however, so slowly, that he did not reach Marburg till the 15th, the day after the battle of Raab, though the distance was only eighteen leagues, being not five miles a-day. Had he exerted himself as his strength permitted and the crisis required, he might have been on the 14th at Radkersburg in Hungary, which was forty-two leagues from Ram, in direct com-

munication with that prince, and in time to share in the battle. This only required him to march ten or twelve miles a-day, no great undertaking for veteran troops and hardy mountaineers; and had he done so, the battle of Raab would either not have been fought or been converted into a victory, and the Archduke John, with sixty thousand undiscouraged troops, would have appeared with decisive effect on the field of Wagram. The first care of a general should be to accustom his soldiers to march: Napoleon's grenadiers were perfectly right, when they said it was by their legs, more than their arms, that he gained his victories.¹

CHAP.
LIX.

1808.

June 15.

¹ Vict. et
Cong. xix.
184. Fel. iv.
120, 121.
Ezz. Johan,
Feld. 238,
240.

A brilliant enterprise, however, though of a subordinate character, awaited the Austrian general. General Broussier, with a French brigade, had been left to besiege the fort of Schlossberg, at Gratz, after Macdonald had left that town, and proceeded onward in the steps of the Viceroy towards the Grand Army; and Giulay, having learned, as he came up from the southward, the exposed situation of the besiegers, conceived the design of surrounding and making them prisoners. On the 24th, his advanced posts were at the gates of Gratz; and Broussier, justly apprehensive of being cut off, had, two days before, raised the siege of the castle, and retired to the bridge of Weinzittel, over the Muhr, at the entrance of the valley of Bruck. Having received intelligence, however, in the course of the same day, of the real position of the main body of the enemy's forces, which he conceived to be unable to take any part in the action which was approaching, he sent back four battalions under Colonel Gambier, who resumed his former position around the fort, and renewed the bombardment. In this situation the besiegers were attacked by a greatly superior force under Giulay, and being entirely separated from the remainder of the troops under Broussier, their destruction appeared inevitable. The heroism of Colonels Gambier and Neagle, however, joined to the intrepidity of their troops, extricated them from their dangerous situation: the Croatian landwehr were no match in close fight for the French veterans; a decisive charge of the bayonet checked the Imperialists in the first onset; when their cartridges were exhausted, the French threw themselves into a churchyard, which

18.
Attack on
Broussier,
near Gratz,
June 24.

June 22.

June 23.

June 25.

June 26.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

June 27.
July 3.
124th Bull.
Month July
10, 1809.
Vict. at
Conq. xix.
185, 185.
Jom. li. 255.
256. Erz.
Johan. Feld.
284, 302.
Fel. iv. 122,
129.

19.
Junction of
Eugene to
the Grand
Army, and
reoccupation
of Croatia by
the Austrians,
July 5.

they defended with invincible resolution, and though weakened by the loss of half their numbers, they were still gloriously combating round their eagles, when Broussier with his remaining four battalions arrived, and cut his way through to his heroic followers. In this memorable action the French lost eight, the Austrians twelve hundred men; and Napoleon, in just testimony of his sense of the conduct of the troops engaged, made Colonel Gambier a count of the empire, and gave to his regiment, the 84th, the motto, "*Un contre Dix*." Marmont, who had been summoned by Broussier to his assistance, arrived on the evening of the 26th before the walls of Gratz, and immediately made preparations, in concert with Gambier for a general assault on the town and suburbs on the following day; but the Imperialists, in no condition to withstand so formidable an attack, withdrew in the night, and the junction of the French generals was effected next day without opposition. They left merely a few battalions to continue the siege of the castle, and, pressing on with great rapidity, arrived in the island of Lobau on the 3d July, where the whole forces of Napoleon were now assembled for the decisive battle which was approaching.¹

The French Emperor, at the same time, had called Prince Eugene and the Italian army to his standards. On the 2d July he received orders to repair without delay to the general rendezvous in the island of Lobau, whither Napoleon had transferred his headquarters from the pulace of Schönbrunn three days before. Skilfully masking his design by a large body of heavy cavalry pushed forward to the advanced posts before Komorn, he withdrew his artillery, stores, and infantry, unperceived by the enemy, and late on the evening of the 5th reached the island of Lobau, where his arrival swelled the host to a hundred and eighty thousand men, with seven hundred pieces of cannon; while, by an unhappy fatality, the Archduke John, though entirely on the left bank of the Danube, still remained in presence of a deserted camp in the plains of Hungary. This general concentration of the French troops in front of Essling was attended with one secondary but important effect, in restoring the southern provinces of the empire to the dominion of Austria, and opening up a direct communication with the English cruisers in

the Adriatic. In proportion as Croatia and Carniola were evacuated by the advance of Marmont to the Danube, those two important provinces were regained by Giulay's troops: several French detachments and depots fell into the hands of the Imperialists; Laybach, with some hundred prisoners, was taken; and the communication with the coast having been restored, a subsidy from England was disembarked in Dalmatia, and after traversing the mountains, arrived in safety in Hungary, to the amount of three hundred and twenty thousand pounds.¹

CHAP.
LIX
1809.

¹ Pel. iv 123,
131. Vict. et
Conq. xix
194, 197.
Stat. 326,
330.

Before the decisive struggle on the Danube commenced, affairs had taken a more propitious turn for the French arms on the shores of the Vistula. The bold stroke of Poniatowsky in throwing himself into the eastern parts of Poland and menacing Galicia, after Warsaw was taken, joined to the tardy but at length serious approach of the Russian forces, arrested the Archduke Ferdinand in his victorious career on the southern Vistula. His advanced guard had already reached Thorn, fifty leagues below the capital, when the intelligence of the march of Poniatowsky in the direction of Cracow, joined to the alarming progress of the insurrection excited by Dombrowsky in the neighbourhood of Posen, the indisposition of Prussia to take any decisive part, and the approach of Prince Gallitzin, with thirty thousand Russians, towards Lemberg and the Gallician frontiers, warned him of the necessity of retreat. Advancing to Lemberg, Poniatowsky had spread his light troops over the whole of Austrian Poland, exciting every where the national enthusiasm, and producing an alarming fermentation by the sight of the much-loved uniforms. His advanced posts had even surmounted the Carpathian range, and carried consternation to within a few leagues of the Hungarian frontier; while another of his divisions, under Sokolniki, had boldly crossed the Vistula, and surprised fifteen hundred Austrians (besides eighteen pieces of cannon) at Sandomir, who were all either slain or made prisoners. At the same time General Pelletier, with a third detachment, by a brilliant *coup-de-main*, made himself master by escalade of Zamosc, though defended by a lofty rampart and deep ditch, and captured two thousand men and an arsenal of fifty pieces of cannon.²

20
Operations in
Poland, and
successes of
the Polish
detachments
at Sandomir
and Zamosc.

May 24.

May 19.

May 20

² Vict. et
Conq. xix.
125, 198.
Pel. iv. 55.
58. Jom. III.
233.

- CHAP. LIX.
1809.
21.
Recapture of
Warsaw by
the Poles,
and retreat of
the Archduke
Ferdinand.
May 24.
- May 30.
- June 2.
- June 15.
- June 17.
1 Pol. fr.
Jom. III. 230.
Vie. et
Conq. xxx.
150, 152.
- This succession of disasters, and still more, perhaps, the approach of the Russians under Prince Gallitzin to the frontiers of Galicia, determined the Archduke Ferdinand to retreat. His generals had, by a sudden attack, made themselves masters of the *tête-du-pont* at Thorn, on the right bank of the Vistula; but the garrison, retiring to the body of the place on the left, burned a part of the bridge, and the Imperialists had neither the means of crossing that ample stream, nor of commencing a siege in form of that fortress. This was the extreme point of their advance. On the following day they commenced their retreat, severely harassed by the light troops which the indefatigable Dombrowsky had raised in the Duchy of Posen. The Austrian garrison being withdrawn from Warsaw on the 30th May, the Polish militia, under Zayonscheck, recovered possession of that capital; and Ferdinand slowly retired towards the Austrian frontier. The indecision and procrastination of Russia were now at an end; and Alexander professed himself prepared in good earnest to adhere to his engagements entered into at Tilsit and Erfurth. General Schaueroth commanded the advanced division of the Austrians; and Ferdinand, with reason, conceived that he might, in his retreat, avenge the check received at Sandomir, by making prisoners the Polish garrison in that town. Detaching Schaueroth, therefore, as a corps of observation towards Lemberg, he himself, with his main body and heavy artillery, suddenly appeared before it; and having brought up his guns, burst open the gates, and his grenadiers penetrated into the streets. The Poles, however, under Sokolniki, rallied with admirable courage, and for eight hours kept up an obstinate resistance from street to street, and from house to house, until the Austrians, wearied, and sensible the place could not long hold out, retired, with the loss of eight hundred killed and wounded, and four hundred prisoners. Finding his ammunition exhausted, however, Sokolniki, two days afterwards, entered into a treaty with the Austrian general, in virtue of which he evacuated the place, and retired to the Polish army.¹

Alarmed at the capture of a place of such importance, Poniatowsky now made the most vigorous remonstrances to Prince Gallitzin, and urged the immediate adoption of

concerted measures; but, though the Russian general was now so near as materially to influence the fate of the campaign, he could not be prevailed on to take an active part, and exhibited an order of the Emperor Alexander which forbade him to cross the Vistula. He consented, however, to occupy the country on the right bank of that river, so as to leave the Poles at liberty to prosecute their operations on the left. Relieved to a certain degree by their presence in that quarter, Poniatowsky suddenly changed his line of operations, and descended the Vistula on the right, in order to connect himself with Zayoncheck and Dombrowsky. Meanwhile, the Archduke Ferdinand received orders to direct his steps a second time towards the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, in order to support the efforts which the cabinet of Vienna at that period were making to rouse Prussia to join the alliance. Having dismantled Sandomir, accordingly, he concentrated his forces; and, while Poniatowsky moved down the right bank of the Vistula, he descended the left, and, with twenty-five thousand men, advanced to Petrikau, on the Pilica.¹

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

22.

Concluding
operations of
the campaign
in Poland.

June 19.
1 Jan. iv.
239, 240.
Monit. June
29, 30, and
July 5, 1809.
Pol. iv. 74,
75.

This offensive movement, however, was not long persevered in; the Archduke Ferdinand had prepared an intrenched camp near the sources of that river, at a point where two roads to Austria branch off, the one by Cracow, the other by Olkusz, and was slowly advancing to occupy it, when hostilities were interrupted by the intelligence of the armistice of Znaym. Meanwhile, the Russians advanced to Cracow, and their vanguard had already occupied its gates; when Poniatowsky, jealous of the acquisition of the second city of old Poland by its most inveterate enemy, summoned all his forces to his standards, and hastened, with twenty-five thousand men, to anticipate Prince Gallitzin in that important conquest. The road was blocked up by Russian troops, who prohibited all further passage; the Poles insisted on their right to advance; the old and ill-concealed animosity of the two nations was ready to break out, and the advanced posts were already coming to blows, when Prince Gallitzin deemed it prudent to yield, and permit the occupation of the city by the Polish troops. There they remained during the whole of the armistice, but the military ardour

23

Cracow is
occupied by
the Poles.
July 6.

July 2.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

¹ Fel. iv. 70,
75. Jom. iv.
239, 240.
21st Bull.
Monit. June
29, 30, and
July 2.

of the Poles was strongly excited by this brilliant termination of the campaign; hopes long smothered began to revive of the possibility of a national restoration; recruits flocked in from all quarters to the national standards, and, before the peace of Vienna, Poniatowsky had forty-eight thousand men on his muster-rolls, besides the troops who were combating under the standards of Napoleon in the Spanish peninsula.^{1*}

24.
Extraordi-
nary concen-
tration of the
French forces
in the island
of Lobau.

July 2.

These successes, however, had only a remote and inconsiderable influence on the fate of the campaign; the decisive blows were to be dealt out from the island of Lobau. There, in the first week of July, a prodigious armament was collected, and the French officers, however much inured to military prodigies, were never weary of admiring the immense array which the activity and foresight of the Emperor had collected for the final struggle. On the 2d July he mounted on horseback at Schönbrunn, and rode to Lobau, where headquarters were thenceforward established: and at two o'clock on the afternoon of that day, the reinforcements began to arrive there from all quarters; and never in modern times, probably never in the history of the world, was such precision witnessed in the movements of corps converging together from such distant quarters. Hardly had Bernadotte arrived with the Saxons from the banks of the Elbe, when Vandamme appeared with the Wirtem-

* Poniatowsky's complaints of the tardiness of the Russians throughout this campaign, were, as might easily have been anticipated, both frequent and acrimonious. On the 27th June, he thus wrote to the Emperor Napoleon:—"Notwithstanding the positive promise of Prince Gallitzin, to move two of his divisions across the San on the 21st instant, he did nothing of the kind. Under pretence of failure of provisions, that measure was not carried into effect till two days after, and then with the same tardiness which has characterised all the operations of the campaign. These delays have given the Austrian corps, which had been thrown forward on the right bank of the Vistula, the means of effecting its retreat without any molestation. The certain intelligence which, subsequent to that period, they had received, that Prince Gallitzin would not pass the Vistula, has encouraged the Archduke Ferdinand to move the greater part of his forces, or about twenty-five thousand men, to the Pulca, and thus menace the frontiers of the Grand-duchy of Warsaw. This has obliged me to move upon Pulawy. The arrival of the Russian army in Galicia having afforded them a pretext for spreading themselves over the province, has contributed materially to retard the formation of the new *lozies*; for the Russian generals establish wherever they go Austrian authorities, who do all they can to torment the inhabitants, and to stifle every feeling which may eventually menace the interests of their sovereign."—SAYARY, iv. 95. In another part he stated,—"The concert of the Russians with Austria is so clearly demonstrated, that, to speak plainly, it was the Polish troops whom they both regarded as enemies. It was the more difficult to prevent the effects of that intelligence, that the chiefs of the two armies acted entirely in concert, to give occasions for it to arise."—FELT, iv. 73.

CHAP.
LIX.
1800.

burghers and troops of the Confederation from Swabia and the Rhenish provinces; Wrede with the Bavarians from the banks of the Lech; Macdonald and Broussier next arrived over the Alpine ridges from Carinthia and Carniola. No sooner had they taken the places assigned them, than Marmont's leading columns began to appear from the Dalmatian shores; and when they had found room in the crowded isle, the veterans of Eugene came up from the Hungarian plains in the neighbourhood of Presburg. By the evening of the 4th the whole were assembled: horse, foot, cannon, and ammunition waggons had traversed in safety the bridges which connected the island with the southern shore; and a hundred and fifty thousand infantry and thirty thousand cavalry, with seven hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, were collected in a space not exceeding two miles and a half in length, by one and three quarters in breadth.* This extraordinary concentration of force had inspired the troops with more than their wonted ardour: none doubted of the issue when the military strength of half of Europe was there accumulated at a single point under the guidance of Napoleon: the lines literally touched each other, and each regiment acquired fresh confidence from the animating story of its neighbour's achievements. Never since the Grand Army broke up in 1805 from the shores of the Channel had it been so collected together; many there met who had not shaken hands since they parted on the heights of Boulogne; and many hearts then glowed with the joy of newly-awakened friendship, which were destined in a few hours to be for ever severed from each other in this world.¹

¹ Pel. iv. 153,
154. Sav. iv.
100, 102.
Jom. iii. 258,
259.

The utmost pains had been taken by the French Emperor, during the interval of hostilities at Vienna, to restore the spirit and enthusiasm of the soldiers, which had been severely weakened by the result of the battle of

* The French military historians give one hundred and fifty thousand men and four hundred pieces of cannon for the total strength of the Grand Army before the battle of Wagram: but we have the authority of Savary (iv. 100, c. 12) for the assertion, that they amounted to the number stated in the text; and Napoleon said, on the evening of the 4th July, to the Austrian general sent with a flag of truce—"Sir, I have no doubt why you have been sent here. So much the worse for your general if he does not know that to-morrow I shall pass the Danube with the whole force you see here: there are one hundred and eighty thousand men; the days are long: woe to the vanquished!"—SAVARY, iv. 101. See also KAUBLER, *Atlas der Schlachten*, 379.

CHAP.
LIX.

1806.

25.

Efforts of
Napoleon to
restore the
spirit of his
soldiers.

Aspern. Gratuities to a large extent had been awarded to the soldiers' widows, under circumstances the most likely to affect the imagination of the receivers and all who witnessed it. Not only did the Emperor himself frequently visit the hospitals, but he made his aides-de-camp regularly inspect them; at stated intervals, and after the recovery of the greater part was in some degree effected, he distributed with great pomp a considerable gratuity to all the soldiers who had suffered. Every private received sixty francs (£2, 10s.) and every officer in proportion to his rank, from one hundred and fifty to fifteen hundred francs (from £8 to £60.) For several days the Emperor and his staff were exclusively engaged in this humane duty; and it was accompanied by circumstances which increased the effect which the gratuity, already so considerable, produced upon the minds of the men. The splendid *cortège* proceeded to the distribution in full uniform, and traversed the long galleries of the hospitals, preceded by the records of the regiments, in which the deeds of each were minutely entered, and followed by servants in full livery, carrying large baskets, in which the money was placed. Twelve or twenty crown-pieces were deposited by the bedside of each man, taken not from the regimental funds, but from the private purse of the Emperor. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the mutilated veterans, as they witnessed the touching scene; many wept with joy who were destined to sink under their wounds before an opportunity of expending their little treasure could arrive.¹

¹ Sav. iv. 68,
82.

26.

Force and
disposition of
the Austrian
army.

The Austrian army, though not equally reinforced, had received considerable accessions of strength since the battle of Aspern, and was animated by a still more profound feeling. The twenty-five thousand brave men who had fallen, or been disabled in that glorious strife, were in part recovered, or had been compensated by the corps of Kollowrath, which had come up from the vicinity of Lintz; twenty thousand more had been drawn from the depots in the interior; and fifty thousand landwehr were incorporated with the regular soldiers, and, from their being constantly exercised with veteran troops, had acquired a considerable degree of efficiency. Thus, above a hundred and forty thousand men were assembled for the decisive

struggle ; besides those under the Archduke John, who, with eighteen thousand regulars and an equal number of the Hungarian insurrection, was at Presburg, ten leagues from the field of battle. If they could all have been brought to bear upon the enemy, their numbers would have been as great as the gigantic host of Napoleon. But they were far from being equally concentrated : and the Archduke Charles was by no means prepared for the extraordinary rapidity and energy which were about to be infused into the enemy's movements. On the evening of the 4th, when the whole array of the French Emperor was accumulated in Lobau, and the ranks of so many distant armies stood almost in close column on its meadows, the generalissimo had little more than half his force ready for immediate operations.

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

The Prince of Reuss was watching the banks of the Danube from Stockerau to Vienna, with his headquarters at Stammersdorf ; Kollowrath was at Hagenbrunn, on the north-western slope of the Bisamberg ; the reserve of grenadiers was at Gerarsdorf ; Klenau at Essling, and in the intrenchments opposite to the bridge of Aspern ; while Nordmann, with the advanced guard, lay at Enzersdorf, and guarded the course of the Danube as far as Presburg. Bellegarde, Hohenzollern, and Rosenberg, were at WAGRAM, or posted along the course of the Russbach ; while the reserve cavalry was at Breitenlee, Aderklaa, and the villages in that neighbourhood. Thus, the Archduke's army was arrayed in two lines, the first stretching twenty leagues along the course of the Danube : the second, two leagues in the rear, posted on the plateau of Wagram and the heights of the Russbach. A courier was despatched on the evening of the 4th, to summon up the Archduke John to the decisive point : but the distance was so great that he could not be expected to arrive at the scene of action till late on the following evening. Seven hundred pieces of cannon attended the army : but the cavalry had never recovered the fatal ravages of the preceding battles, and the equipment of the artillery was far from being in the perfect state in which it was at the commencement of the campaign, or so complete as that of the French had become from the resources of the arsenal of Vienna. Never was more clearly demonstrated the vital importance of

1 Kausler,
381. Jom.
III. 258. Pel.
IV. 155, 160.

27.
Positions of
the Austrian
corps.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

1 Kautler,
Schlechten
von Neues
Zeit, 381.
Jom. iii. 258.
280. Fel. iv.
155, 157, 162.
Stat. 343,
350. M. de
Grune's
Correspond.
Official.

28.
False pre-
parations for
a passage in
front of
Aspern.

July 2.

July 3.

central fortifications in war: many of the enthusiastic recruits of Austria were now deficient in the most necessary equipments, while the French troops found all their losses amply supplied from the stores of the capital. Had Vienna still held out, or its magnificent arsenal been secure from attack, the fate of the campaign would probably have been different, and Wagram had been Leipsic. But the whole warlike multitude were animated by a heroic spirit; every one felt that the crisis of the monarchy was at hand, and the glorious result of the battle of Aspern had inspired them all with the most sanguine hopes as to the ultimate issue of the struggle.¹

The better to conceal his real designs, Napoleon had some days before made preparations as if for forcing a passage over the great bridge, and through the intrenchments of Aspern and Essling. On the 2d July, five hundred voltigeurs were embarked and transported across to the small island which lay in the middle of the northern branch of the Danube between these two villages; the Imperialists were dispossessed, and the bridge was commenced. The Archduke, upon the first alarm, hastened to the spot, and a violent fire was opened by the Austrian batteries, on the French engineers engaged in its construction: above two hundred cannon-balls fell among the boats without arresting these brave men. The bridge was soon completed as far as the island from Lobau: nothing but a fordable branch, thirty yards broad, now separated the French from the northern bank. Such was the importance which Napoleon attached to this demonstration, that on the following morning he came himself to the spot, and in his anxiety to reconnoitre the opposite coast, ascended to the summit of the parapet, and remained there for some minutes, within pistol-shot of the Croatian outposts on the northern bank.* He ordered a lunette to be constructed on the western part of this little island, capable of affording protection to a bridge of rafts, which was kept in readiness to be thrown over the

* Massena accompanied the Emperor on this occasion, and as he withdrew from the front was grievously bruised by a fall of his horse. The army were fearful that they would be deprived of his powerful aid on the field of battle: but he appeared there on the following day in an open calèche. Napoleon exclaimed, when he saw him striving against pain and exposed to the fire, "Who would fear death when he sees how the brave are prepared to die!"—FELER, iv. 152, note.

last shallow branch of the river, under cover of the parapet. Thus the French were masters of two bridges leading from the salient angle of the island of Lobau into the field of Aspern; and the Imperialists were so impressed with the idea that the passage was to be attempted at the same point as the former one, that, by daybreak on the morning of the 4th, their massy columns were in motion from the plateau of Wagram; and in two hours after, the works, along their whole extent, were gleaming with helmets and bayonets.¹

Napoleon, however, had no intention of forcing the passage at this point, and these preparations, so serious in appearance, were but a stratagem to conceal the real point of attack from the enemy. Nothing of importance was attempted during the remainder of the 4th; but, towards evening, the troops being all collected, burning with ardour, and the preparations completed, Oudinot commenced the embarkation at Enzersdorf. The Emperor himself took his station on horseback on the margin of the branch where the passage was to be attempted, and with indefatigable energy urged on the movements. With such vigour were they conducted, that in a quarter of an hour, the bridge destined for the passage of that corps was thrown across: all hands were immediately turned to the three bridges which had been secretly prepared in the covered channel of the Danube; and the first, composed of a single timber frame, was brought out of its place of concealment, thrown across, and made fast to the opposite shore, in the short space of ten minutes. The transporting and fastening of the other two required a little more time; but with such vigour were the operations conducted, under the immediate inspection of the Emperor, who never ceased an instant during the whole night to direct and animate the men, that by three o'clock in the following morning six bridges were completed, and the troops of all arms were in full march across them.²

A violent fire was during the whole time kept up from a hundred and nine pieces of heavy cannon, disposed along each side of the salient angle formed by the northern extremity of the island of Lobau, on the Austrian lines, which fell with unprecedented fury on the village

CHAP.
LIX.
—
1806.

¹ Fel. iv. 149,
163. Viet.
et Cong. xix.
201. Jom.
il. 260, 261.

29.
Extraordi-
nary passage
of the Danube
by Napoleon.
July 4.

² Viet. et
Cong. xix.
201, 202.
Stat. 302,
305. Fel.
167, 168.

30.
Dreadful
tempest and
scene during
the passage.

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

of Enzersdorf, and induced the enemy to open from all their batteries on the bridge of Aspern, in the idea that it was there the passage was going forward. Both shores soon formed a line of flame; the heavens were illuminated by the ceaseless flight of bombs: seldom fewer than twelve of these flaming projectiles were seen at once traversing the air in opposite directions. Vehement, however, as was the contest of men, it was surpassed by the elemental strife on that awful night. A tempest arose soon after it was dark: the wind blew with terrific violence; torrents of rain fell without intermission; the thunder rolled above the loudest roar of the artillery; and the frequent glare of the lightning outshone even the flames of Enzersdorf, which, set on fire by the French bombardment, burned with inextinguishable fury from being fanned by the gales of the tempest. During this terrible scene, however, the cool judgment of Napoleon never for an instant lost sight of the main object in view. For several hours he walked incessantly, amidst mud and water, from one bridge to the other; the passage of the troops was pressed on with indefatigable activity; and numerous boats which without intermission plied to and fro, facilitated the transportation of the foot-soldiers. Such was the unprecedented vigour of all concerned in the operation, that by six o'clock in the following morning, not only were all the bridges firmly established, but a hundred and fifty thousand infantry, thirty thousand cavalry, and six hundred pieces of cannon, were grouped in dense array on the northern shore, between Enzersdorf and the margin of the Danube.¹

¹ Sav. iv. 102, 103. Pol. iv. 167, 173. Vict. et Cong. xix. 202, 203. Stat. 302, 309. Larry, iii. 347.

31.
Vast advantages gained by this manoeuvre to the French.

Great was the surprise of the Imperialists, at daybreak on the 5th, to see not a man passed over by the bridge opposite to Aspern, but the plain farther down, opposite to Enzersdorf, covered with an enormous dark mass of troops, drawn up in close column, in the finest array, in such numbers as almost to defy calculation. The tempest had ceased: the mists rolled away as day approached; the sky was serene, and the sun of Austerlitz shone forth in unclouded brilliancy. His rays revealed a matchless spectacle. The shores of the Danube were resplendent with arms; cuirasses, helmets, and bayonets glittered on every side: the bridges, the isle of Lobau,

the northern shore, were covered with a countless array of men, drawn up in admirable order, or pressing on in ceaseless march; while long files of artillery presented an apparently irresistible force to the enemy. Then appeared, in the clearest manner, the vast advantage which the French Emperor had gained by the unexampled manœuvre of the preceding night. The river was passed, the communications with the opposite shore secured, the left flank of the Austrian position turned, all the intrenchments intended to bar the passage taken in reverse, the labour of six weeks rendered useless, the enemy cut off from his communication with Hungary and the remaining resources of the monarchy, and thrown back, with his face to the east, towards the Bohemian mountains. The activity and genius of Napoleon had in a few hours defeated all the long-meditated designs of the Austrian generals. The plateau of Wagram, chosen, with provident foresight, as the most advantageous central position from whence to fall upon the leading corps which had effected the passage, had lost much of its peculiar value by the river having been crossed in a single night by the whole army; and the rival hosts were reduced to combat on equal terms in the vast plain of the Marchfeld, under circumstances which promised but a doubtful chance of success to the Imperial forces. The French soldiers, rapid beyond any others in Europe at apprehending the chances and dangers of their situation, at once appreciated the advantage they had gained; and casting a look of admiration at the bridges, the *chaussées*, the intrenchments, by which the dangers of the passage had been surmounted, turned in joyous confidence towards the enemy: while their chief had already commenced the formation of gigantic field-works to protect the army upon the northern shore.^{1*}

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Fel. iv. 172, 175. Sav. iv. 103, 104. Jom. iii. 260. 261. Vict. et Conq. xix. 202, 203.

* The Austrian generals had, after long consideration, selected the plateau of Wagram as the most favourable ground whereon to throw their last stake for the independence of the monarchy. In the Imperial cabinet the French found, after the battle, a valuable military work on the environs of Vienna, in which the second camp to be taken, in the event of the river being crossed, was precisely that which the Archduke occupied at Wagram. The chances of both parties were ably calculated; but the skilful engineer had never discovered the vast military importance of the island of Lobau, nor contemplated the possibility of the enemy throwing six bridges from it to the opposite side, and crossing one hundred and eighty thousand men over in a single night.—See SAVARY, iv. 105.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

32.

Retreat of
the Austrians
to the posi-
tion of
Wagram.
July 5.

Having lost, through the unparalleled activity of their opponents, the favourable opportunity of attacking the French army in the act of passing the bridges, nothing remained to the Austrians but to retire to the position in the rear of Aspern and Essling, which had been selected after mature deliberation by the Imperial generals, as the most favourable ground whereon to throw the last die for the independence of the monarchy. All their outposts accordingly were called in; the whole intrenchments, constructed at so vast a cost of labour in front of the bridge of Aspern, were abandoned; and the army retired to its last and chosen field, on the plateau of WAGRAM. The strength of this position justified the choice of the Archduke, and did credit to the prophetic anticipations of the Aulic Council. It consists of an elevated plain, in the form of a vast parallelogram, which rises at the distance of four miles from the Danube, at the northern extremity of the plain of the Marchfeld. This plateau is bounded along its southern front by the stream of the Russbach, which, descending at first through the high grounds which form the northern boundary of the valley, perpendicularly to the Danube, from north to south, turns sharp round towards the east at Deutsch Wagram, and flows along the whole front of the position to Neusiedel, at the foot of the heights which form its southern rampart. This stream is six or eight feet broad, and though every where fordable by infantry, can be traversed by cavalry and artillery only at the bridges in the villages, which were carefully guarded. From Neusiedel, the plateau turns sharp to the northward, and has its eastern face clearly defined by a steep ridge descending to the low grounds in that direction for several miles to the north.¹

¹ Personal
Observation.
Vol. iv. 188.
Kausler, 84.

33.
Its descrip-
tion and great
strength.

Thus this plateau formed a great square redoubt, rising on the north of the plain, with a wet ditch running along its front, and strengthened by the villages of Wagram and Neusiedel at each angle. The village of Baumersdorf, situated half a mile to the south of the Russbach, about the centre of the southern front, formed an outwork beyond the wet ditch. Though this important plateau, however, constituted the strength, it was by no means the whole of the Austrian position. Their lines extended

also to the westward far beyond Deutsch Wagram, along a ridge of heights, arranged as it were by nature for the defensive position of a vast army, as far as Stammersdorf and the eastern slope of the fir-clad Bisamberg; forming altogether an elevated position, about fifteen miles in length, on a series of heights facing and slightly curved towards the south. From their feet to the Danube, distant about nine miles, stretched out the vast and level plain of the Marchfeld. In the concave space included in this curve, at the foot of the heights, about their centre, is the village of Gerarsdorf; and a few miles farther, in the level surface of the Marchfeld, the villages of Aderklaa and Sussenbrunn, which thus lay about midway between the two armies, and became important points of attack, and the theatre of desperate conflicts in the battle which followed.¹

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Personal Observation. Fel. iv. 168, 169, 184. Kautler, 54. Jom. iii. 264.

The Archduke, in consequence of the dispersed state of his army, rendered unavoidable by the uncertainty which prevailed as to the place where the passage would be attempted, had only the grenadiers and corps of Rosenberg, Bellegarde, and Hohenzollern, sixty thousand strong, on the plateau of Wagram and in the village of the same name, when the enemy appeared before him. Klenau and Kollowrath were at a distance on the Bisamberg with the right wing; and the left, under the Archduke John, was twenty-five miles off, stretching towards Presburg. No serious resistance, in consequence, was made to the advance of the French over the plain; the Austrian outposts retiring as the French approached towards their central position on the hills. Napoleon's army, after the passage was effected, was drawn up between Lobau and Enzersdorf, perpendicular to the river, with its left touching the water: the concentration of the troops was such, that it resembled an immense close column, nearly two hundred thousand strong. Presently, however, the order to march was given, and the different corps advanced in a semicircular direction, like the folds of a fan, to the north, east, and west, towards Enzersdorf, Essling, Breitenlee, and Raschdorf. Massena was on the left towards Essling and Aspern; Bernadotte, with the Saxons, towards Aderklaa; Eugene and Oudinot between Wagram and Baumersdorf; Davoust and Grouchy on the

34.
Advance of the French over the Marchfeld. July 5.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

right, in the direction of Glinzendorf; while the Imperial Guards, Marmont's corps, Wrede, with the Bavarians, and the heavy cavalry, were in reserve under the Emperor in person. Partial combats took place as the Imperialists fell back before this enormous force, both at Enzersdorf and Raschdorf; but no serious resistance was attempted, and the two corps of the Austrians which were in advance in the intrenchments on the banks of the Danube, retired leisurely on the road to Gerarsdorf and Neusiedel. The vast field-works between Aspern and Essling were abandoned; the Imperialists retired to the heights in the rear on which the main body of their forces was stationed; and the French army, spreading out like rays from a centre, overspread as far as the margin of the Russbach the immense plain of the Marchfeld.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
265. Pel. iv.
174, 182.
Sav. iv. 104,
105.

35.
Vehement
attack of the
French on
the plateau of
Wagram.

At six o'clock Napoleon had come up to the plain between Raschdorf and Baumersdorf, in front of the plateau of Wagram; and he then ascertained that the Archduke John had not yet arrived, and could not appear on the field that day. He immediately resolved to profit by his great superiority of numbers, and commence an attack: for he had a hundred thousand men grouped in his centre, ready for instant operations; while on the plateau beyond the Russbach, between Wagram and Neusiedel, the Austrians had not more than sixty thousand, under Hohenzollern, Bellegarde, and Rosenberg, to oppose them. Powerful batteries were accordingly brought up, which speedily opened a heavy fire upon the Imperialists' position, to which the Archduke's guns, posted along the front of the plateau, replied from higher ground, and with more effect. Oudinot's corps came first into action in the centre. He attacked Baumersdorf at the foot of the plateau, which was defended by General Hardegg; but such was the obstinacy of the resistance, that he was unable either to force the village, carry the bridges, or make his way across the stream in its rear on either side. Eugene was stationed opposite to Wagram: his leading divisions commenced the attack with great spirit, and, fording the Russbach, ascended the heights in gallant style; but, when they arrived at the summit, they were staggered by a murderous discharge of grape from sixty Austrian guns, within half musket-

shot, to which the French had nothing but musketry to oppose, as their guns had not been able to get across the stream. Macdonald, Dupas, and Lamarque, who commanded the divisions engaged, kept their ground, and, bringing up their reserves, the action became extremely warm; and at length the Austrian front line was broken, and thrown back in confusion upon their second. It was now the turn of the Archduke and his generals to feel alarmed: the enemy had broken in upon their position in its strongest part, and his irruption, if promptly supported, promised to pierce the centre of their extensive line. Several Austrian regiments soon after broke, and the French divisions, continuing their triumphant advance, took five standards and two thousand prisoners.¹

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Sav. iv.
106. Jom.
iii. 266. Pel.
iv. 185. Stut.
310, 315.

In this extremity the Archduke Charles hastened in person to the spot, at the head of the regiments of Zach, Vogelsang, and D'Erlach, whose steadiness had stemmed a similar torrent on the field of Aspern, and succeeded, by a determined resistance in front, in arresting the advance of the column. At the same time, Hohenzollern, who had repulsed the attack of Oudinot, charged them vigorously on the right flank with a chosen body of hussars; and Bellegarde poured in destructive volleys from his grenadiers, abreast of whom the French had now arrived, on the left. The struggle was terrible for a few minutes, and in the course of it the Archduke was wounded; but it terminated in the repulse of the French, which was speedily converted into a rout, as they were driven headlong down the steep, and fled in wild confusion across the stream of the Russbach. The corps under Bernadotte, who were advancing to their support, in the darkness mistook the retreating host for enemies, and fired upon it; they, in their turn, were overthrown by the torrent of fugitives. The contagious panic communicated itself to the Saxon troops, which suffered most severely both from friends and enemies; one of their battalions "disappeared entirely in the confusion, and was never seen again;"* and the three French divisions, which had so nearly penetrated the Austrian line, disbanded and flying over the plain beyond Raschdorf, spread an indescribable alarm through

36.
Which after
a desperate
struggle is at
length
repulsed.

* Expression in General Dupas's official report.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

the French centre as far as the tents of the Emperor. In the general confusion the whole prisoners escaped; the taken standards were regained; two French eagles were captured; and, had the Imperialists been aware of the disorder which prevailed, and followed up their success with fresh troops, the consequences might have been fatal to the French army. Ignorant, however, of the

¹ Pel. iv. 185.
195. Sav. iv.
106. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
204, 205.
Jom. iii. 266.
25th Bull.
Monit. July
15, 1809.

prodigious effect produced by this nocturnal irruption, the Austrian generals at eleven o'clock sounded a retreat; their troops fell back to their original positions at Baumersdorf, Wagram, and the crest of the plateau: while the French army, wearied with the fatigues of that eventful day, lay down to rest in the vast plain around Raschdorf, and was soon buried in sleep.¹

37.
Position and
plan of Napo-
leon for the
battle on the
following day.

So destitute was the Marchfield, at that period, both of trees and habitations, that there was hardly a fire in the whole French army, from the extreme right to the left of the line. At midnight it became intensely cold, and it was with great difficulty that a few parcels of straw and pieces of wood could be got to make a fire for the Emperor. He had advanced with his Guard to the front of the first line, during the panic consequent on the rout of the Saxons and Eugene's corps, and his tent for the night was pitched in the middle of the grenadiers and *vieux moustaches*. Though the troops around were buried in sleep, Napoleon sat up during the whole night, conversing with the marshals and generals of division, receiving reports from the different corps, and communicating to his lieutenants the designs which he had formed. His army occupied a great right-angled triangle, of which the base rested on Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf; one front faced Stammersdorf, Sussenbrunn, and the slopes of the Bisamberg; the other the plateau of Wagram and Neusiedel; while the apex, pointing directly at the Austrian centre, was in front of Aderklaa. The project of the Emperor was founded on this concentration on his side, and the scattered position of his opponents on the semi-circular range of heights, above fifteen miles long, from the Bisamberg to Neusiedel. Refusing and weakening his left, he determined to throw the weight of his attack upon the centre and left of the Austrians; hoping thereby to break their line in the point where it was weakest, by an

enormous mass of assailants, and cut off the Archduke Charles from the army which, he was well aware, would speedily come up, under the Archduke John, from the neighbourhood of Presburg. With this view a considerable dislocation of his troops took place during the night; Massena, who lay on the left around Essling and Aspern, was moved at two in the morning by his right towards Aderklaa, in front of the plateau of Wagram, leaving the single division of Boudet to guard Aspern and the bridges. Thus the whole strength of the French army was concentrated in the centre and right: Davoust being on the extreme right; Massena next to him in front of Aderklaa; Marmont, Oudinot, Eugene, and Bernadotte, in front of the plateau of Wagram; and Bessières, with the Imperial Guards and reserve cavalry, in the rear of the centre round Raschdorf.¹

CHAP.

LIX.

1809.

¹ Pel. iv. 197,
199. *Jom.*
iii. 266, *Sav.*
iv. 106, 107.
Vict. et
Conq. xix.
205.

The brilliant success which had crowned the action on the night of the 5th, made an important change in the dispositions of the Archduke. Perceiving the determined resolution of his troops, and encouraged by the important check which they had given to the enemy, even though the latter were possessed of a considerable superiority of force, he resolved to assume the offensive, and anticipate the designs of the French Emperor by a general attack with all his forces. This resolution was taken at midnight on the 5th, and at two in the following morning, orders were despatched to the Archduke John to hasten up with all his disposable force to the scene of action. He was understood to be at Marchegg, thirteen miles from the right flank of the French army; but he might with ease arrive on the field by one o'clock in the afternoon, when it was hoped his appearance with thirty thousand fresh troops would be attended with the most important effects. Foreseeing, from the attack of the preceding evening, that the principal efforts of the enemy would be directed against the plateau of Wagram, where the ground was naturally strong, the Archduke resolved to make his chief effort on his right against Aspern and Essling, in order to menace the bridges and communications of the French army. Success in this direction, combined with the attack of the Archduke John on the same important points from the left,² promised entirely to neu-

38.
The Arch-
duke resolves
to assume the
offensive.
July 6.

² *Sav. iv.*
109. *Pel. iv.*
199, 200.
Kausler, 385.
Stut. 324,
326.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

39.
His plan of
attack.

tralise any advantage which the enemy might gain in front of Wagram ; and, in fact, threatened as he would thus be in the rear and on either flank, an imprudent advance in the centre would only augment the dangers of his situation, by withdrawing the main body of the army farther from the means of retreat.

With these views, Kollowrath and Klenau were concentrated on the Austrian right, on the eastern slope of the Bisamberg, and reinforced to fifty thousand men the troops of Lichtenstein and Hiller ; Rosenberg, on the left, received orders to descend towards Glinzendorf, in order to form a junction with, and co-operate in the expected attack of the Archduke John on the left ; Bellegarde, during the night, was pushed on to Aderklaa, which the Saxons evacuated in disorder on his approach ; while Hohenzollern, and the reserve grenadiers and cavalry, occupied the line of the Russbach and the crest of the plateau, having strong parties both in Wagram and Baumersdorf. Thus, the Imperialists, when the shock commenced in the morning, formed an immense semicircle, with their strength thrown into the two wings ; the French, an interior convex quadrant, with their columns issuing like the folds of a fan from its centre. The forces of the former were overwhelming on the right, and their left was almost impregnable, from the strength of the plateau of Wagram, so fatally experienced on the preceding evening ; but the centre of their position, towards Sussenbrunn, naturally weak, was not so strongly defended by troops as to promise an effectual resistance to the great French force which was concentrated in its front.¹

¹ Pel. iv. 199,
200. Vict.
et Conq. xix.
205, 206.
Sav. iv. 109.
Jom. iii. 267.
Kausler, 385.
Stat. 324,
329.

40.
Commence-
ment of the
battle of
Wagram.
July 6.

It was intended by the Archduke, that Kollowrath and Klenau, with the right wing, should commence the attack : but the difficulty of conveying the orders in time to the extreme points of so extensive a line was such, that before these distant generals could arrive at the scene of action, it had already begun in the centre and left. At daybreak Napoleon was not yet on horseback, but only preparing the grand attack which he meditated on the enemy's centre, when suddenly the discharge of cannon was heard on his right ; and soon after, the increasing roar and advancing smoke in that direction indicated that the Austrian right wing was

seriously engaged, and making rapid progress. Immediately after, intelligence arrived that the Russbach was passed, Glinzendorf threatened by Rosenberg on the right, and Aderklaa, abandoned by Bernadotte on the preceding night, occupied in force by Bellegarde in the centre. Notwithstanding all his activity, the French Emperor was anticipated in the offensive, and the direction in which the Imperialists had commenced their attack, rendered him apprehensive that the Archduke John had come up during the night, and that his right flank was about to be turned by an overwhelming force. Instantly appreciating the importance of such a combined attack, Napoleon hastened with his Guards and reserves of cuirassiers to the scene of action ; and drew up the artillery of the Guard in such a position as to command the right of Rosenberg's corps, which had now advanced near to Glinzendorf ; but hardly had these powerful reinforcements arrived near that village, when the Austrian advance was arrested. In effect, Prince Charles, finding that the Archduke John had not arrived, and that the enemy had moved an overwhelming force in that direction, ordered Rosenberg to suspend his attack, and soon after, he withdrew his troops behind the Russbach ; but they sustained a considerable loss in their retreat, from the charges of the French cuirassiers, and the cannonade of the artillery of the Guard on their flank.¹

¹ Sav. iv. 106,
203, 207.
Jom. iii. 267.
Kausler, 385,
386.

Hardly was this alarm dispelled on his right, when Napoleon received still more disquieting intelligence from his centre and left. The first rays of the sun had glittered on the bayonets of Klenau and Kollowrath's corps as they descended the verdant slopes behind Stammersdorf, and joined Hiller and Lichtenstein near Leopoldau ; and already the sound of their cannon towards Breitenlee and Aspern told but too clearly the progress they were making to turn the left flank of the French army. But the danger in the centre was still more pressing. Massena, in executing his prescribed movements from the left to the right of the field of battle, had attacked Aderklaa with his leading division under Cara St Cyr. The village was speedily carried by the gallantry of the 24th regiment ; but instead of merely occupying the houses, and strengthening himself in so important a point, St Cyr pushed

41.
Defeat of
Massena in
the centre.

CHAP.

LIX.

1809.

through to the opposite side, and brought his troops within range of a terrible fire of grape and musketry from Bellegarde's corps, drawn up in force on the plain betwixt that and Wagram. The French, breathless with their advance, were so shattered by the discharge that they suddenly recoiled, and being at the same time charged in flank by the Austrian cavalry, were pushed back in confusion into Aderklaa. At the same time the Archduke Charles, who felt the full value of this post, hastened to the spot with the grenadiers of Aspre, and charged the assailants with such vigour that they were driven out of the village at the point of the bayonet, broken in the plain beyond, and thrown back in utter disorder upon the Saxon, Baden, and Darmstadt contingents, who disbanded and fled in such confusion that they overwhelmed Massena, who, although severely bruised by a fall off his horse, was in the field in his calèche, to such a degree that he made the dragoons about his person charge them as if they had been enemies.* Transported by the animation of the charge, the Archduke Charles pushed forward, at the head of his brave grenadiers, a considerable way in front of Aderklaa, where he found himself, almost alone, so near the enemy that he heard a French officer command his voltigeurs to make him prisoner, and received a ball in the shoulder before he could regain the breathless ranks of his followers.¹

¹ Sav. iv. 109,
110. Pel. iv.
210, 212.
Jom. iii. 268.
Kausler, 386.
Archduke
Charles's
Account.

42.
Napoleon's
measures to
arrest the
disorder.

Napoleon perceived from afar the disorder of the left of his centre, and instantly hastened to the spot to arrest it. Directing Davoust to attack Neusiedel, and press the Austrian left, and ordering his Guards to counter-march as rapidly as possible from right to left across the whole field, which they had so lately traversed in the opposite direction, he himself set out at the gallop, followed by the squadrons of his cuirassiers and horse-artillery of the Guard, and soon arrived at the spot

* A young Saxon colonel, during the rout of the corps, finding his efforts, prayers, and menaces alike ineffectual to prevent his men from dispersing, advanced with his standard in his hand to a regiment of the French Imperial Guard which had just come up, and throwing himself into their ranks, said, "Frenchmen, I trust to you this standard: you, I am sure, will defend it: my regiment is to be found wherever courageous resistance is made to the enemy." How many instances of heroism in all nations did the Revolutionary war bring forth! What elevation of soul did it occasion!—See *Victoires et Conquêtes*, xix. 218.

where Massena, almost alone in his chariot in the midst of the fugitives who overspread the plain, was making brave efforts to arrest the disorder. He instantly alighted from his horse, mounted into the chariot beside the marshal, conversed a few seconds with him, and pointing to the tower of Neusiedel, the steeples of Wagram, Sussenbrunn and Aspern, made all around him comprehend that a grand movement was in preparation to check the enemy. The confusion was in some degree arrested by the presence of the Emperor and the powerful reinforcement which he brought with him, and immediately the prescribed alteration in the order of battle commenced: Massena's corps, which had almost all broken, was re-formed under cover of the artillery and cavalry of the Guard, and commenced a countermarch by battalions in close column towards Aspern; while the cuirassiers of St Sulpice, by repeated charges, kept at bay the threatening columns of the enemy.¹

¹ Pel. iv. 209,
211. Sav. iv.
110. Vict.
et Conq. xix.
207, 208.

The French infantry, restored to order by the efforts of the Emperor, executed the prescribed movements athwart the field of battle with the most perfect regularity, though torn in pieces all the way by a terrible fire of artillery from the Austrian right wing on their flank. But their departure from the neighbourhood of Aderklaa, before the infantry of the Guard and the reserves had come up from Neusiedel, weakened seriously the French line, which was reduced to the defensive at the most important point of the whole field—the salient angle running into the Austrian position—and compelled to remain stationary under a tremendous cross-fire of artillery from the hostile batteries on either side of the angle. The courage of the soldiers quivered under this dreadful trial, where war exhibited all its dangers with none of its excitement, and several battalions disbanded and fled. Napoleon, meanwhile, calm and collected in the midst of the general disquietude, rode backwards and forwards for an hour amidst a storm of cannon-balls, unmoved by personal danger, but casting frequent and anxious looks towards Neusiedel, where the prescribed attack by Davoust was every moment expected to make itself known, from the advancing cannonade and smoke in that direction. He was mounted on a snow-white charger called Euphrates,

43.
Dreadful
trial to which
the troops
were exposed
in executing
them.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

¹ Sav. iv. 110,
111. Pel. iv.
210, 212.
Jom. iii. 268.
Vict. et
Conq. xix.
208.

a present from the King of Persia ; and when the firing was most vehement, he rode in front of the line, which was too far distant from the enemy to return a shot from the infantry, or from guns of ordinary calibre, though raked in all directions by the heavy batteries of the Austrians. His suite expected every moment to see him struck down by a cannon-ball : but, albeit noways insensible to the disastrous consequences which would in all likelihood attend his fall, he felt too strongly the necessity of his presence to preserve order at that important point, to shrink for a moment from the scene of danger.¹

44.
Splendid pro-
gress of the
Austrian
right towards
Essling.

It was not surprising that Napoleon exposed himself so much to maintain this salient angle of his position, without recalling Massena, or weakening his corps on the right, for the danger had become so pressing from the progress of the Austrians on the left, that the battle appeared irrecoverably lost. At ten o'clock, Kollowrath and Klenau, preceded by sixty pieces of cannon, had swept the whole field of battle. After occupying Breitenlee and Neuwerthaus, they had fallen with an overwhelming superiority of force on Boudet and Le Grand, who, with eighteen thousand men, had been left to keep their ground against such fearful odds, put them to the rout, captured all their artillery and four thousand prisoners, and driven them through Aspern into the French *tête-du-pont* on the edge of the Danube. Following up this important success, the Austrians re-entered the intrenchments in front of the island of Lobau, regained all the redoubts evacuated on the preceding day, occupied Essling, and pushed their advanced posts so near to the bridges leading to Enzersdorf, that the French heavy guns, on the shores of the island, opened their fire to protect the retreat of the army, with as much vehemence as they had done forty hours before to cover the passage of the river. Driving the enemy before them like chaff before the wind, the whole Austrian right, with loud shouts, pressed on towards Enzersdorf. Startled by the unexpected sound, which was soon heard even above the thunder of the artillery in front, the French reserve parks and baggage trains were seized with a universal panic ;² fugitives on all sides overspread the field in rear

* Archduke
Charles's
Official
Account of
Wagram,
Ann. Reg.
1809. App.
to Chron.
Sav. iv. 110.
Pel. iv. 213,
214. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
208.

of the army, and fled to the bridges, which were speedily choked up by the throng. Cries of "All is lost! the bridges are taken!" were already heard in the ranks; while the anxious crowds who thronged the sceples of Vienna, and with beating hearts and speechless emotion watched the advancing fire of the columns, above all the roar of the artillery heard the Austrian cheers, and already the thrilling voice was heard in the capital, "The country is saved!"

But Providence had decreed it otherwise; and four years more of misery and bondage were destined to punish the faults and unite the hearts of Germany. While this splendid success attended the efforts of the Austrian right, their left, against which Napoleon had accumulated his forces under Davoust, had undergone a serious reverse. This illustrious chief, who had fifty thousand admirable troops at his command, including three divisions of the reserve cavalry, had no sooner received Napoleon's directions to attack the Austrians on the plateau, than he despatched Friant and Morand with the veterans who had gained the day at Auerstadt, to cross the Russbach below Glinzendorf, ascend the valley above Neusiedel, and turn the extreme left of the enemy; while he himself, with the two other divisions, attacked that village in front; and Oudinot was ordered to keep Hohenzollern in check, in the centre of the plateau behind Baumersdorf. It required some time to execute, out of the range of the enemy's cannon, this movement round the extremity of his position; for sixty pieces of cannon, disposed along the front and eastern face of the plateau, swept the whole level ground at its feet, as far as the guns would carry. At ten o'clock, however, the two divisions of Friant and Morand had crossed the Russbach, supported by a numerous artillery and ten thousand horse, under Grouchy, Montbrun, and Arighi. Rosenberg, meanwhile, perceiving the danger with which he was threatened, had accumulated his forces in strength at Neusiedel and the angle of the plateau behind it; and with his troops drawn up, facing outwards, on the two sides of a right-angled triangle, was prepared to maintain his important position against the formidable odds which were about to assail him;¹ while the guns on the

CHAP.

LIX.

1809.

45.

Success of
Davoust
against the
Austrian left
wing.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xix.
209. Pel. iv.
226, 227.
Kausler, 387.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

crest of the plateau behind his lines replied to the more numerous batteries of the enemy in the plain below with vigour and effect.

46.
Terrible
shock which
there took
place.

Morand's division came first into action, and boldly mounted the heights; but, notwithstanding the gallantry of their attack, they were driven back in disorder by the destructive fire of the Austrian cannon, and the rapid discharges of their musketry. Upon this Friant came up to his support; and Morand, rallying under cover of his lines, recommenced a furious assault on the enemy, and after a desperate resistance, succeeded in ascending the plateau on its eastern front. Friant, at the same time, passing farther on, made his way to the summit. The tower of Neusiedel, however, still held out, though a powerful French battery thundered against it from an adjoining height to the eastward; and the Austrian cavalry, who were drawn up at the foot of the ascent, essayed several charges against the ponderous steel-clad cuirassiers of Arighi and Grouchy. The shock was terrible. The French proved at first victorious, and routed Rosenberg's horse with great slaughter. Hohenzollern's cuirassiers next came up to avenge the disaster, and Grouchy in his turn was broken and forced back. Montbrun then charged the victorious Austrians, when blown by their rapid advance, with decisive effect: and, after desperate acts of gallantry on both sides, they were compelled to follow the retrograde movement of their infantry, and abandon the eastern front of the plateau.¹

¹ Kausler,
387. Jom.
iii. 272, 273.
Pel. iv. 225,
228. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
209.

47.
Neusiedel is
taken, and
the Austrian
left driven
back.

While this important advantage was gained by the French on their extreme right, a furious combat on the right centre was raging around Neusiedel. Davoust in person there led on the divisions Gudin and Pauthod to the attack with extraordinary vigour: the resistance by the Prince of Hesse Homberg was equally obstinate; and some reinforcements despatched by Hohenzollern long enabled that gallant officer to maintain his ground against greatly superior forces. At length, however, the Austrians were driven by main force from the houses, and pushed back to the foot of the plateau: there they again made a stand, and for long strove with desperate resolution to make good the tower, and prevent Davoust from

debouching from the village. In this terrible strife Nordman and Veczay were killed ; Hesse Homberg, Muger, Wartheachben, and almost all the Austrian generals, wounded ; while, on the French side, Gudin received four wounds, and almost all his generals were struck down. At length the tower was carried by assault, and the enemy's infantry driven in disorder from the ground they had so long defended in its rear. Davoust, upon this, ordered the cuirassiers of Arighi to charge the retreating lines, and soon the slope of the plateau glittered with the dazzling rays of their helmets. But the horsemen got entangled in broken ground, among the huts of the Austrian bivouacs ; and the few who reached the summit were so grievously shattered by the point-blank fire of the guns posted there, that the whole were driven headlong down, with severe loss, into the plain. Notwithstanding this success, however, Rosenberg was unable to keep his ground on the angle of the plateau above Neusiedel, after the tower had fallen : his left was turned by Morand and Friant, who had established themselves on the crest of the plateau ; and on the other side Oudinot, transported by the enthusiasm of the moment, had converted his feigned into a real attack, and though repeatedly repulsed, had at length made his way across the Russbach, near Baumersdorf, and despite all the efforts of Hohenzollern, who was weakened by the succours sent to Neusiedel, reached the crest of the plateau. Threatened thus on both flanks, Rosenberg drew back in excellent order, still facing to the eastward, and, forming a junction with Hohenzollern, took up a position towards the centre of the plateau, nearly at right angles to the line of the Russbach, and covering two-thirds of its surface ; while Davoust, apprehensive of being taken in rear by the Archduke John, whose approach to the field was already announced by the scouts of both armies, showed no disposition to molest him in the new line which he had occupied.¹

Napoleon was still riding with his suite in the perilous angle in front of Aderklaa, when these alternate disasters and successes were passing on either wing of his army. The accounts which he received from his left were every moment more alarming. Officers in breathless

¹ Kausler, 387. Jom. iii. 272. Pel. iv. 229, 231. Vict. et Conq. xix. 209.

48.
Grand attack by Napoleon from the centre.

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

haste arrived every ten minutes to announce the fearful progress of the enemy in that direction. "The cannon," said one, "which you hear in the rear is that of the Austrians;" the Emperor made no answer. "The division Boudet is driven back into the island of Lobau, and he has lost his artillery," said another: still no answer; but his eyes were anxiously turned to the tower of Neusiedel, which was visible from all parts of the plain; and he frequently asked if the fire was on the east or west of that building. At length Davoust's cannon were distinctly seen to pass Neusiedel, and the slopes of the plateau were enveloped in smoke. "Hasten back to Massena," said he to the aide-de-camp, "and tell him to commence his attack—never mind Boudet's guns: the battle is gained." At the same time he despatched orders in all directions for offensive operations; Bessières, with ten regiments of the reserve cavalry, was directed to charge the Austrian right wing, which had advanced so far into the French rear, in flank; while Massena, who had now got back to his original ground near Aspern, assailed it in front; Eugene, Marmont, and Bernadotte, were to assault Wagram; Oudinot and Davoust to renew their attacks, and, if possible, drive the enemy from the plateau; while the Emperor in person prepared the decisive effort, by a grand charge of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, in the centre. For this purpose Eugene's corps, which had marched across the field from Baumersdorf, was arranged in close columns of three divisions—Macdonald in the central division, consisting of eight strong battalions; on either flank were six, drawn up in close array; behind them marched Serras's division and Wrede's Bavarians; the light horse of the Guard and the cuirassiers of Nansouty covered their flanks; a hundred pieces of cannon, chiefly of the Guard, under Drouot, which had now come up from Neusiedel, admirably served, preceded the whole, and spread death far and wide; while the Emperor himself, with the cavalry and infantry of the Old Guard, closed the array, on the success of which he had staked his fortune and his crown.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
272, 273.
Sav. iv. 112,
213. Pel. iv.
121, 223.
Kausler, 388.
Dum. Souv.
ii. 375.

Napoleon himself gave the signal to this terrible column to advance: its instructions were to move right upon the

steeple of Sussenbrunn, leaving Aderklaa to the right. The Archduke early perceived the effort which was preparing against his centre, and made every possible disposition to resist it. The lines were doubled; the reserves of cavalry and the right of Bellegarde's corps brought up to the menaced point; artillery on either side planted in great abundance, so as to open a cross-fire on the advancing column; while the Archduke in person hastened to the spot with his whole staff, to be in a situation to act with promptitude in the terrible crisis which was approaching. Hardly had they arrived, when Lauriston and Drouot's artillery approached: the cannoniers, regardless of the cross-fire of the hostile batteries, advanced at the trot to within half cannon-shot, and then opened a prodigious fire from their hundred pieces, which was sustained with such rapidity that it forced back the Austrian line immediately in front, and dismounted several of their guns. Taking advantage of the confusion produced by this discharge, Macdonald advanced with his column directly in at the opening, and pierced the Imperial centre. Aderklaa and Breitenlee were soon passed; Sussenbrunn was menaced. Moving steadily forward through the wreck of guns, the dead, and the dying, this undaunted column, preceded by its terrific battery incessantly firing, pushed on half a league beyond the front, in other points, of the enemy's line. In proportion as it advanced, however, it became enveloped by fire: the guns were gradually dismounted or silenced, and the infantry emerged through their wreck to the front. The Austrians drew off their front line upon their second, and both falling back, formed a sort of wall on each side of the French column, from whence issued a dreadful fire of grape and musketry on either flank of the assailants. Still Macdonald pressed on with unconquerable resolution: in the midst of a frightful storm of bullets, his ranks were unshaken; the destinies of Europe were in his hands, and he was worthy of the mission. The loss he experienced, however, was enormous; at every step huge chasms were made in his ranks, whole files were struck down by cannon-shot, and at length his eight dense battalions were reduced to fifteen hundred men!¹ Iso-

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

49.
Decisive advance of Macdonald in the centre.

¹ Kausler, 388. Pel. iv 221, 224. Sav. iv. 113. Jom. iv. 273. Vict. et Conq. xix. 210.

**CHAP.
LIX.**

1809.

50.
Measures of
Napoleon to
support that
attack.

1 Kausler,
388, 389.
Sav. iv. 112,
113. Pelet,
iv. 225, 226.
Vict. et Cong.
xix. 210, 211.
Dum. Souv.
ii. 376.

51.
Retreat of
the Arch-
duke.

lated in the midst of enemies, this band of heroes was compelled to halt. The empire rocked to its foundation : it was the rout of a similar body of the Imperial Guard at Waterloo that hurled Napoleon to the rock of St Helena.

Following with intense anxiety the advance of this column, however, the Emperor was at hand to support it. The divisions on the flank, those of Durutte and Paethod, which had insensibly fallen behind during the advance of Macdonald with the central column, were ordered to move forward ; Serras and Wrede were hastened up to his aid ; and the Young Guard, under Reille, detached to support their attack. This last succour, however, almost exhausted the reserves of Napoleon. "Husband your men as much as possible," said he to Reille, as he gave him the command : "I have now no other reserve but the two regiments of the Old Guard." At the same time Nansouty, with the cuirassiers on the left, and Walther, with the dragoons on the right of Macdonald's column, received orders to charge the masses in front of them, and Oudinot, Eugene, and Marmont to press the enemy as much as possible towards Aderklaa and Wagram. The Emperor's anxiety was extreme as the cuirassiers of the Guard passed him at a quick trot : plunging his sword in the air, he exclaimed, "No sabreing ! Give point, give point !"¹

The charges of the cavalry proved most unfortunate. Hardly had Bessières set off to execute the orders of the Emperor, when he was struck by a cannon-shot, which tore his thigh, killed his horse, and so disfigured his whole person, that he was taken up for dead. Nansouty succeeded to the command, and led on the charge ; but such was the severity of the fire which they immediately encountered, that in a few minutes twelve hundred horsemen were struck down by cannon-balls, and the whole were compelled to halt, and retire before they even reached the enemy. The dragoons on the right, under Walther, met with the same fate ; and, after sustaining a grievous loss, were driven back under cover of the foot-soldiers. But the infantry were more successful. No sooner did Macdonald perceive that the divisions of Paethod, Durutte, Serras, and Wrede, had come up to

his flanks, and that Reille was advancing to his support, than he resumed his forward movement. The whole mass moved on with a steady front, again preceded by its terrible battery; and the Archduke, despairing now of maintaining his position, when assailed at the crisis of the day by such a formidable accession of force in the now broken part of his line, gave directions for a general retreat. It was executed, however, in the most admirable order: the infantry retiring by echelon, and alternately marching and facing about to pour destructive volleys into the ranks of the pursuers.¹

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

¹ Pel. iv. 234,
238. Arch.
Charles's
Official Ac-
count, Ann.
Reg. 1809.
Kausler, 389.

The field of battle, as seen from the steeples of Vienna, now presented a magnificent spectacle. Massena, upon the retreat of Kollowrath and Klenau, readily regained Essling and Aspern, and the Austrian army, in a line nearly perpendicular to the Danube, slowly and deliberately retired: while the French host formed a vast line of sabres and bayonets, from the banks of the river to the summit of the plateau of Wagram, on which the rays of the sun, now beginning to decline, glanced with extraordinary splendour. Vast volumes of smoke at intervals indicated the position of the opposing batteries; a white curling line marked the advance and line of the infantry; and gleams of almost intolerable brightness were reflected from the helmets and cuirasses of the cavalry. A bloody encounter took place at Gerarsdorf, which the rearguard of Kollowrath long held with unconquerable bravery; but it was at length carried by the chasseurs of the Guard: Wagram yielded to the impetuous assaults of Oudinot, and two battalions were made prisoners. But, with this exception, the retreat of the Austrians was conducted with hardly any loss. The Archduke, with consummate skill, availed himself of every advantage of ground to retard the enemy; and so exhausted were the French by their efforts, that they displayed very little vigour in the pursuit. Neither cannons nor prisoners were taken; the cavalry hardly charged: but for the retrograde movement of one army and the advance of the other, it would have been impossible to have decided which had gained the advantage in the fight.² Napoleon was much chagrined at this indecisive result, and suffered his ill humour to exhale in open reproaches against the

52.
Appearance of
the Austrian
army, and
bloody en-
counters on
its retreat.

² Kausler,
389, 390.
Pelet, iv. 234,
238. Arch.
Charles's
Official Ac-
count, Ann.
Reg. 1809.
App. to
Chron. Sav.
iv. 114. Vict.
et Conq. xix.
211, 212.
Dum. Scov.
ii. 376, 377.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

cavalry generals of the Guard. "Was ever any thing seen like this? Neither prisoners nor guns! This day will be attended with no results." At nightfall, the Austrians occupied a line along the heights behind Stammersdorf, from which their right wing had descended in the morning, along the great road to Brunn, through Hebersdorf, to Obersdorf; while the French bivouacked in the plain, three miles in their front, from the edge of the Danube near Florisdorf, perpendicularly up to Sauring, at the foot of the hills.

53.
Tardy approach and retreat of the Archduke John. Vital importance of his co-operation.

It was towards the close of this obstinately contested battle that the Archduke John approached the field. Between three and four o'clock his columns came up to Leobensdorf and Obersiebenbrunn; while his advanced posts reached Neusiedel, and even approached Wagram, which the French troops had passed through not an hour before in pursuit of the Austrian Grand Army! Finding, however, upon his arrival there, that his brother had abandoned the field, and was retiring at all points towards the Bisamberg, he justly conceived apprehensions concerning his own situation, left alone with forty thousand men in the rear of the Grand Army, and gave orders to retreat. He marched till after dark, and regained Marchegg before midnight. An incident occurred, however, soon after he retired, which demonstrated in the most striking manner the vital importance of his co-operation, and the decisive effect which might have arisen from it, had he come up, as he had been ordered, at an earlier hour of the day.¹

¹ Vict. et Conq. xix. 215. Jom. iii. 276. Sav. iv. 115.

54.
Striking nocturnal alarm which illustrated it.

The Emperor, worn out with fatigue, had lain down to rest, surrounded by his Guards, in the plain between Sussenbrunn and Aderklaa, when cries of alarm were heard from the rear. The drums immediately beat at all points; the infantry hastily formed in squares, the artillerymen stood to their guns, the cavalry saddled their horses. Napoleon himself mounted his horse, and asked what was the cause of the alarm. "It is nothing, sire," replied Charles Lebrun, one of his aides-de-camp—"merely a few marauders." "What do you call nothing?" replied the Emperor warmly. "Know, sir, there are no trifling events in war: nothing endangers an army like an imprudent security. Return to see what is the matter,

and come back quickly to render me an account."* Meanwhile he prepared every thing for a nocturnal combat, and the aspect of affairs in the rear of the army was such as to call forth all his solicitude. The artillery, baggage-waggons, stragglers, and camp-followers, who crowded the rear, were flying in disorder to the Danube; the plain was covered with fugitives, the entrance of the bridges blocked up with carriages, and many who even had the river between them and the supposed danger, continued their flight, and never drew bridle till they were within the ramparts of Vienna. The alarm spread like wildfire from rank to rank: the Guard even was shaken: the victors for a moment doubted of the fate of the day. The ranks presented the appearance of a general rout; and yet the whole was occasioned by a single squadron of the Archduke John's cavalry, which had been far advanced towards Wagram, and, seeking to regain, as he retired, the road to Presburg, had cut down some French marauders in one of the villages on the east of the field! So vital was the line of communication on which that prince was intended to act, and so important were the results which must have ensued from his co-operation, if it had taken place, as the generalissimo was entitled to expect, at an earlier period of the day.¹

Such was the memorable battle of Wagram, one of the greatest and most obstinately contested of the whole war, and perhaps the most glorious in the whole Austrian annals. The loss on both sides was immense; twenty-five thousand brave men on each side were killed or wounded without any decisive result having been obtained. The other trophies were nearly equally divided: the Austrian right wing had made five thousand prisoners, and two thousand of their own wounded† had fallen into

CHAP.
LIX.
1800.

1. *Jom. iii.*
266, 277.
Vict. et Conq.
xix. 215. *Sav.*
v. 115.

55.
Results of the
battle.

* "Canto guerrier pugnando
Già vincitor si vede;
Ma non depono il brando,
Ma non si fida ancor:
Chè, le nemiche prede
Se spensierato aduna,
Cambia talor fortuna
Col vinto il vincitor."

METASTASIO, *Ciro*, Act ii. scene 7.

† The 25th Bulletin says the French took 20,000 prisoners, forty pieces of cannon, and ten standards; and Sir Walter Scott has heedlessly transcribed that statement.² It is, however, grossly inaccurate, and proved to be so even by the warmest partisans of Napoleon. "The enemy retired," says Savary, who was by the Emperor's side though the whole battle, "at four o'clock, and

² Scott's *Napoleon*, vi. 394.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

¹ Kausler,
389, 390.
Pelet, iv. 238.

56.
The loss of
the battle was
owing to the
Archduke
John's ne-
glect of
orders.

the hands of the enemy in the centre of the plain. They were nowhere defeated: no panics disgraced their lines: no columns laid down their arms. Slowly, at the command of their chief alone, they retired in regular order from the field without the loss of either prisoners or cannon, and inspiring, even to the last, dread to the enemy who followed their steps.¹

To have maintained such a conflict with greatly inferior forces, against Napoleon at the head of a hundred and eighty thousand men, was itself no ordinary distinction. But this is not all: if their forces had all joined in the action, and they had thereby been restored to an equality with the enemy, there can be no doubt the result would have been different. But for the failure of the Archduke John to come up at the period assigned to him, the battle would have terminated in a glorious and decisive victory. Had that prince made his appearance on the field either at six in the morning, when Rosenberg, in anticipation of his co-operation, advanced to Glinzendorf; or later, when Kollowrath and Klenau had routed the French left wing, and their leading columns were approaching the bridges of Lobau; or even when the fate of Europe hung in suspense on the advance of Macdonald's column in the centre, there can be no doubt that Napoleon would have been totally defeated, and possibly a disaster as great as that of Waterloo would have effected, six years before that memorable event, the deliverance of Europe. Experience in every age has demonstrated, that after the protracted excitement of a great battle the bravest soldiers become unstrung,* and at such a moment the attack of a few

abandoned to us the field of battle, but *without prisoners or cannon*, and after having fought in such a manner as to render every prudent man cautious of engaging in a rash enterprise: we followed without pressing him, for the truth is he had not been at all cut up. He made head against us every where; his troops were very numerous, and *he had, in reality, no reason for retiring*; though fortunately for us he did so, and thus gave to France all the moral advantages of a victory."² Jomini says, "The Archduke retreated during the night, *leaving us no other trophies* but some thousand wounded or prisoners, and a few dismounted cannon. Their loss was 25,000 men; ours was about the same."³ Sir Walter's *Life of Napoleon* is a surprising work, considering that it was written in little more than twelve months, by an author whose previous years had been spent in studies of a different description; but his narrative is often little more than a transcript of the bulletins or *Annual Register*, and it is not surprising that in less than two years he could not, under severe anxiety and affliction, master what would have required twenty years, in Gibbon's words, "of health, leisure, and perseverance."—See LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott*, vii. 42.

* "The long and fearful excitement of battle once relaxed, leaves the toll-worn

¹ Savary, iv.
114, 115, 116.

² Jomini, iii.
276.

fresh troops often produces the most extraordinary results. It is this which so often has chained success to the effort of a small reserve in the close of an obstinately disputed day; which made Kellerman's charge at Marengo snatch victory from the grasp of the triumphant Austrians: and the onset of Sir Hussey Vivian's brigade on the flank of the Old Guard at Waterloo, overthrow at once the military fabric of the French empire.¹

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Kausler, 389. Pel. iv. 238. Jom. iii. 275.

The general terror inspired in Napoleon's rear by the capture of Aspern and Essling in the morning; the marvellous panic occasioned by the charge of a squadron of hussars on their extreme right at night, demonstrate* that the disaster at Aspern had inspired the French troops with a nervous disquietude about the bridges in their rear; and that any alarm in that quarter was likely to produce even greater effect on them than on troops of less military foresight and experience. What, then, must have been the effect of thirty thousand fresh troops suddenly thrown into the rear of the French army, where there was no reserve to oppose them, at the moment when the victorious shouts of Kollowrath's troops, and the ominous sound of the cannon of Lobau, announced that their retreat was all but cut off; or when the heroic column of Macdonald, wasted away to fifteen hundred men, had checked its advance in front of Sussenbrunn? The Archduke John is a most accomplished prince, and as a private individual no one has greater title to esteem; but either his jealousy of his brother, or his incapacity to perceive the object of combined operations, twice in that single campaign proved fatal to his country:² once when he disobeyed the orders of the Archduke Charles to com-

57.
Decisive evidence which exists of this.

² Kausler, 389, 390. Pelet, iv. 238, 239. Jom. iii. 275, 276.

frame nerveless and exhausted, and the mind itself destitute of the energy requisite for any renewal of vigorous exertion. A bold onset made by a few resolute men on troops who have maintained, even successfully, a hard day's combat, is almost sure to turn the scale in favour of the new assailants.—*Life of Wallenstein*, by LIEUT.-COLONEL MITCHELL, p. 259; a work written with the spirit of a soldier, the principles of a patriot, and the penetration of a statesman.

* "If we reflect," says General Pelet, the able historian of this campaign, himself an actor in the mighty events he commemorates, and withal an ardent partisan of Napoleon, "on the result of the battle of Fontenoy; if the fifteen hundred who remained of Macdonald's corps had been surrounded and charged by fresh troops assembled from the right and the left, and those who remained on the heights of Stammersdorf, the battle might still have been gained by the Austrians. The Emperor had no other reserve at his disposal but two regiments of the Old Guard: the Isle of Lobau was threatened, and all around it was in the utmost disorder. The Archduke had many more forces not engaged than were required to have made that attack."—PELET, iv. 248.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

58.
Napoleon
visits the field
of battle.

bine with Kollowrath an attack on the bridge of Lintz, on the French line of communication, immediately after the battle of Aspern; and again, by his tardiness in obeying the orders of the same generalissimo to hasten to the theatre of decisive events on the field of Wagram.*

The day after the battle, Napoleon, according to his usual custom, rode over the field of battle. Without the features of horror which had imprinted so awful a character on that of Eylau, it presented some circumstances of a still more frightful and distressing description. The plain was covered with the corpses of the slain; the march of Macdonald's column especially might be traced by the train of dead bodies which lay along its course. Such was the multitude of the wounded, that they far exceeded all the efforts of the French surgeons, and of the humane citizens of Vienna, for their relief; and, four days after the battle, the mutilated remains of human beings, still alive, were found in great numbers among the rich fields of wheat with which the plain was covered. Some of these unhappy wretches endured for days together the rays of a vertical sun during the dog-days, without either food or water: mutilated, and unable to remove the flies which fastened on their wounds, they literally became, while still alive, the prey of the insects which hover round carcasses of animals in hot weather.¹ The glancing of the

1 D'Abr. xii.
261, 262.

* Orders were despatched by the Archduke Charles to the Archduke John to hasten up to Enzersdorf on the evening of the 4th July. On the same night Prince Eugene's army, to which he was opposed, entered the island of Lobau. The Archduke John lay on the night of the 4th at Presburg, distant ten leagues from Wagram. He received the despatch at five in the morning of the 5th, and instead of setting out, as he should have done, in a few hours, he did not move till midnight on the 5th, and, in consequence, had only reached Marchegg, five leagues on his road, at ten o'clock on the 6th—the very time when he should have been attacking the French right at Leopoldsdorf or Glinzendorf. The Archduke Charles, conceiving he had, in obedience to his instructions, arrived there on the night of the 5th, had sent an order to him, as already mentioned, to co-operate in the attack on the latter village in the morning, which he could easily have done had he arrived there the night before, as it is only four leagues distant from the extreme French right; whereas he only appeared on the ground at half-past three in the afternoon, when the general retreat was resolved on. Prince John marched from Presburg to near Glinzendorf, between midnight on the 5th and four o'clock p.m. on the 6th, that is, in sixteen hours, which was as expeditious as could have been expected. Had he set out seven hours after getting his orders, *i. e.* at noon on the 5th, he would, at the same rate, have been on his ground at four a.m. on the 6th, in time to have co-operated with Rosenberg in the attack on the French right, retained Napoleon and his Guards in that quarter to make head against such formidable assailants, and altogether prevented the countermarch of those veterans from right to left, which repaired the disaster of Massena and Bernadotte in the centre, and arrested the victorious advance of Kollowrath and Klenau on the right. But for the failure of the Archduke John to come up in time, therefore, the battle was irrevocably lost to Napoleon.—See PELLET, iv. 162, 233.

arms, the pride of military display was no more: soiled with dust, stained with blood, helmets and cuirasses late so brilliant lay piled on each other in sad and neglected confusion.* The Emperor frequently dismounted, and with his own hands administered relief to some of the wounded, and drew tears of gratitude from eyes about to be closed in death.† The knowledge that the victory was to their own, had restored all their wonted enthusiasm to the French soldiers; the wounded exclaimed "*Vive l'Empereur!*" as he passed, and hoisted little white flags, formed by putting their handkerchiefs or an arm of their shirts on their bayonets, as well to testify their joy as to implore relief.¹

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

¹ Pel. iv. 241.
Sav. iv. 119.

After having traversed the field of battle, Napoleon inspected the soldiers who were about to march in pursuit of the enemy, and distributed rewards in great profusion among the most deserving. In passing, he stopped and held out his hand to Macdonald: "Touch it, Macdonald, without any farther grudge:‡ from this day we shall be friends; and I will send you, as a pledge of my sincerity, your marshal's staff, which you won so gloriously yesterday." "Ah! sire," replied Macdonald with tears in his eyes, "we are now together for life and death." And well did the hero of Scottish blood redeem his word! Through every future change of the Emperor's reign he adhered with unshaken fidelity to the fortunes of his master. He was to be found by his side, alike amidst the disasters of Fontenoy as the triumph of Wagram;²

50.
And makes
Macdonald a
marshal.

² Sav. iv. 119.
120. Pelet,
iv. 241, 242.

* "L'arme che già sì liete in vista foro,
Faceano or mostra spaventosa e mesta.
Perduti ha i lampi il ferro, i raggi l'oro:
Nulla vaghezza ai bei color più resta.
Quanto apparia d'adorno e di decoro
Ne' cimieri e ne' fregi, or sì calpesta.
La polve ingombra ciò ch' al sangue avanza.
Tanto i campi mutata avean sembianza!"

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xx. 52.*

† "The Emperor stopped his horse beside a young officer of carabineers, who had had his skull fractured by a cannon-shot; he knelt beside him, felt his pulse, and wiped with his own handkerchief the dust from his lips and brow. A little spirits made him revive. He opened his eyes and fixed them on the Emperor; he recognised him, and his eyes filled with tears; but he was too weak to be able to sob, and soon after breathed his last."—SAVARY, iv. 119.

‡ A coldness had long subsisted between Napoleon and this distinguished general. He had not been employed in any considerable command since the battle of the Trebbia, in 1799. Jealousy and malevolence had widened the breach occasioned by Macdonald's original disinclination to join the herd of obsequious flatterers at the Tuilleries. How often does difficulty and misfortune bring to the post they are really worthy to fill, those noble minds who disdain the arts by which in easier times favour is generally won!—SAVARY, iv. 119.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

and, when all the other objects of his bounty had deserted their benefactor and passed over to the enemy, he remained almost alone to support him; *the latest object of his prosperous favour, but the most faithful follower of his adverse fortunes.*

60.
Appointment
of Oudinot
and Marmont
marshals of
the empire.
Disgrace of
Bernadotte.

Oudinot, a general, as the bulletin said, "tried in a hundred battles," and Marmont, whose campaign in Illyria and Carniola had so powerfully contributed to the success of the Grand Army, were at the same time elevated to the rank of marshals. Very different was the destiny which awaited Bernadotte, Prince of Pontecorvo, hitherto one of the most favoured of Napoleon's lieutenants. This chief, who had been singularly unfortunate both in his attack on the heights of Wagram and village of Aderklaa, on the evening of the 5th, and his encounter with the Austrian centre on the morning of the 6th, had with the true spirit of Gascony, his native country, glossed over his defeat by a boasting proclamation to the Saxons on the 7th, in which he professed to convey to them the Emperor's approbation for the gallantry which they had evinced on these occasions.* Napoleon, who was both irritated at Bernadotte and the Saxons for the abandonment of Aderklaa, which it cost him so much time and bloodshed to regain on the following day, and jealous of any of his lieutenants assuming his own peculiar function in the distribution of praise or blame, immediately prepared and circulated, but among the marshals and ministers alone, an order of the day, reflecting in very severe terms, both on the conduct of the Saxons and upon this step on the part of their chief;† and soon after a

July 9.
July 30.
1 Bour. viii.
280. Fel. iv.
241. Sav. iv.
123.

* Bernadotte's proclamation to the Saxons was in these terms:—"Saxons! in the day of the 5th July, seven or eight thousand of you pierced the centre of the enemy's army, and reached Deutsch Wagram, despite all the efforts of forty thousand of the enemy, supported by sixty pieces of cannon; you continued the combat till midnight, and bivouacked in the middle of the Austrian lines. At daybreak on the 6th, you renewed the combat with the same perseverance, and in the midst of the ravages of the enemy's artillery, your living columns have remained immovable like brass. The great Napoleon was a witness to your devotion; he has enrolled you among his bravest followers. Saxons! the fortune of a soldier consists in the performance of his duties; you have worthily performed yours."—Bivouac of Leopoldstadt, 7th July 1809. This order of the day was inserted in all the German papers at the time.—Bour. viii. 280.

† Napoleon's order of the day was couched in the following terms:—"Independent of the consideration, that his Majesty commands the army in person, and that to him it belongs to distribute the measure of praise or blame to every one; on this particular occasion, success was owing to the French and not to any foreign troops. The order of the day of the Prince of Pontecorvo, tending

decree was published in the bulletin dissolving that corps, and incorporating its soldiers with other parts of the army.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

Bernadotte sought a private interview with the Emperor on this painful subject, but in vain; he constantly refused to see him; and the disgraced marshal immediately set out for Paris, where he was soon after employed by the minister at war, without the concurrence of Napoleon, in a very important duty, that of commanding at Antwerp during the English invasion of the Scheldt. No sooner, however, did the Emperor learn of this fresh appointment by the government at Paris, than it, too, was cancelled, and Bessières put there in his stead; even although Bernadotte's efforts, during the short period he held the command, had been eminently serviceable to the empire. These repeated indignities made a deep impression on the mind of the French marshal; they revived that ancient jealousy at the First Consul* which all the subsequent glories of his reign had not entirely extinguished; induced a sullen discontent with the Imperial service, which experience had shown was liable to such inconstancy; made him grasp eagerly at the Swedish throne, which fortune soon after proffered to his acceptance; and, by investing the disgraced soldier with the power and feelings of an independent sovereign, contributed in the end, in no inconsiderable degree, to the downfall of the French empire.¹

61.
Who is appointed to the command of Antwerp, and again disgraced.
July 30.

¹ Bour. viii.
280, 281.
Pel. iv. 241,
242. Sav. iv.
123.

to inspire false pretensions in troops of the most ordinary description, is contrary to truth, to policy, to the national honour. The success of the 5th, is due to the Marshals the Dukes of Rivoli and Oudinot, who pierced the centre of the enemy at the same time that the corps of the Duke of Auerstadt turned their flank. The village of Deutsch Wagram was not taken on the evening of the 5th; it was so only on the morning of the 6th, at six o'clock, by the corps of Marshal Oudinot. The corps of the Prince of Pontecorvo did not remain 'immoveable as brass;' on the contrary, it was the first to beat a retreat. His Majesty was obliged to cover the corps of the Viceroy by the divisions Broussier and Lamarque commanded by Marshal Macdonald, by the division of heavy cavalry commanded by General Nansouty, and a part of the cavalry of the Guard. It is to that Marshal and his troops that the eulogium is really due, which the Prince of Pontecorvo has attributed to himself. His Majesty desires that this testimony of his displeasure may serve as an example to deter any marshal from arrogating to himself the glory which belongs to another. His Majesty has, nevertheless, desired that this order of the day, which would doubtless distress the Saxon army, though its soldiers knew well that they do not merit the eulogiums which have been bestowed upon them, shall remain secret, and only be sent to the marshals commanding the *corps d'armée*.—NAPOLÉON."
—See BOURRIENNE, viii. 281, 289; who seems, to admit, that the leading facts stated in the severe order of the day by the Emperor, are well-founded.

* *Ante*, Chap. xxix. § 30.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

62.

The Austrians retire towards Bohemia.
July 7.

Two lines of retreat were open to the Archduke after he had determined to relinquish the field—that to Olmutz and Moravia, and that to Bohemia; and so little did the French press their adversaries when the retrograde movement commenced, that the Emperor was for some time ignorant which of the two routes they had adopted. There were several reasons, however, which induced the Austrian general to prefer the latter. Prague was, next to Vienna, the greatest military establishment, and contained the largest arsenal of the empire; and it stood in a country surrounded with a range of hills which offered favourable positions for retarding the advance of an invading army. Hopes were not wanting, also, that the great naval and military armament which England had so long been preparing, would soon make its appearance either in Flanders or the north of Germany, and that the indecision of Prussia, notwithstanding the retreat from Wagram, might be determined by such powerful support in the north of Germany. For these reasons, the line of

¹ Fel. iv. 253.
255. Jom. iii.
279, 280.
Stat. 329, 336.

Bohemia was selected for the retreat of the Grand Army; leaving to the Archduke John, with the forces under his command, and the Hungarian insurrection, the care of covering Hungary and the eastern provinces of the empire.¹

63.
And take the road to Znaym.

The greater part of the army followed the high-road to Znaym: Rosenberg alone, on the extreme left, took that to Brunn by Wolkersdorf. The retreat continued all the 7th without any serious molestation from the enemy; while Napoleon, who was disquieted by the presence of so large a body as the Archduke John's army, still untouched, on his right flank, and by the menacing advance of Giulay with twenty-five thousand men from the side of Styria towards Vienna, separated the immense army which had so lately been concentrated on the field of Wagram; Davoust, Marmont, Massena, with Oudinot, Bessières and the Guards, being directed to follow on the traces of the Archduke Charles; the Viceroy's corps, augmented to fifty thousand men by the addition of the Saxons and Wirtemburghers, being moved towards Presburg, to observe the Archduke John; while Macdonald's division remained in charge of the bridges of Vienna, and was prepared, with the garrison of the capital, to repel any insult that might be offered by the Ban of Croatia.

No less circumspect than adventurous, Napoleon at the same time ordered a hundred pieces of heavy cannon to be mounted on the ramparts of Vienna, augmented its garrison to six thousand men, laid in provisions for six months, directed the formation of great new fortifications on the *têtes-du-pont* of the capital, especially at Florisdorf, where the road to Brunn and Znaym traversed the Danube, and ordered Passau, Lintz, Raab, Melk, and Gottweig, in different directions round the capital to be put in a state of defence.¹

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

¹ Pelet, iv.
253, 257.
Jom. iii. 279,
280. Napo-
leon's Orders,
9th July,
1809. Pelet,
iv. 408.

No considerable action took place during the retreat. Massena, however, pressed the retiring host with all his wonted activity, and bloody encounters of inconsiderable bodies marked the track of the armies. The Archduke conducted the retreat with consummate skill, and in the most admirable order: always protecting the rear-guard, composed of formidable masses of cavalry and infantry, by a numerous artillery skilfully posted on the rising grounds with which that undulating country abounded.

64.
Retreat of the
Archduke to
Znaym, and
his position
there.

To accelerate his movements, and if possible throw him in some degree into confusion, Napoleon moved Marmont's corps, which was following Rosenberg on the road to Brunn, by a cross-road to Laa, by which means he threatened to arrive at Znaym before the main Austrian army. The Archduke no sooner received intelligence of this movement, than he fell back with all his forces, and took post at that town, on the banks of the Taya. Nothing can surpass the military position which the environs of Znaym afford: the town itself, surrounded by walls, rests, towards the west, on the rugged precipices which border the river; towards the east, on the slopes of the Lischen, the ground descends on all sides to the point of Schallersdorf, where the river turns sharp by a right angle, and flows towards Lipwitz, and the junction of the Lischen and Taya. These two streams thus enclose, as it were, a vast bastion, with a great natural wet ditch in front, about a mile long, and equally broad. The Archduke himself took post at Brenditz, which rendered him master both of the roads to Budwitz and Bohemia, and to Brunn; but the slopes of Znaym were filled with troops, the bridge of the Taya was barricaded, and four powerful batteries were erected on the heights above to dispute the passage.²

July 9.

July 10.

² Pelet, iv.
264, 267.
Jom. iv. 232.
Vict. et Cong.
xix. 216, 217.

**CHAP.
LIX.**

1809.

65.

Combat at
Znaym.
July 11.

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Strong as the position was, it was doubtful whether the Austrians would maintain themselves in it. The advanced guards of Massena, indeed, when they first approached the bridge, were arrested by the tremendous fire of grape and musketry which issued from the woods and heights on the opposite side. But the French cannon were soon placed in such a position as to rake the Austrian batteries: the bridge was disengaged by their flanking fire; fords were discovered both above and below; and soon the attacking columns were passed over, and began to ascend the slopes on the opposite side. The Archduke withdrew his troops into Znaym; and arranged his artillery in such numbers around its walls, that, when the French leading columns arrived within reach of the fire, on the slope leading to the town, they were checked by the terrible discharge, and obliged to retire precipitately with severe loss. Upon this the Austrians issued forth, and took post round the town and in front of the bridge, in great strength, in a position admirable for defence, though cramped for manœuvring, and especially hazardous if a retreat was intended. A dreadful storm arose at noon, which darkened the air, and deluged both armies with such a torrent of rain, that for two hours the discharge of fire-arms was impossible, and the combat of necessity was suspended. When the atmosphere cleared, Massena renewed his attacks on the grenadiers in front of the bridge; but he was driven back, and the Austrians, pursuing the flying enemy, regained that important passage, and made prisoners a battalion with three generals, in the village at its opposite extremity. Massena, upon this, brought up the 10th regiment, which again won the village, forced the bridge, and being followed by a brigade of cuirassiers, who charged with uncommon resolution, drove back the enemy's column to their position in front of Znaym, with the loss of five hundred prisoners. Meanwhile, the French guns were brought up on the left, in great numbers, to Edlepiz, from whence they took in flank the most formidable batteries of the Austrians.¹

¹ Pelet, iv.
269, 273.
Jom. iii. 282.
Dum. Souv.
ii. 378, 379.

The progress of the Austrians in front of Znaym did not escape the observation of Napoleon, who had arrived during the storm at Theswitz, and established himself at the headquarters of Marmont's corps. To relieve the

pressure on Massena, who was obviously engaged with superior forces, and whose defeat would endanger the whole army, he immediately ordered the former marshal to debouch from Theswitz, to cross the Lischen, and to ascend on the north-eastern side the plateau of Znaym. These orders were quickly obeyed, and Marmont crossed the stream and ascended the hill, but was exposed to a very heavy fire when he approached the town of Znaym, and came within reach of the formidable Austrian batteries arranged round its walls. Matters were thus in a very critical state ; for the two corps of Massena and Marmont were alone engaged with the whole Austrian army, except Rosenberg's corps ; and Davoust and Oudinot, destined to support them, could not arrive at the theatre of action till the following morning. Nevertheless Massena, with his usual impetuosity, was urging the attack on the town, and already the rattle of musketry was heard in the suburbs, when the cry was heard, "Peace ! peace ! cease firing." Such, however, was the exasperation of the contending parties, that it was with great difficulty the action could be stopped ; and when the officers arrived from the headquarters of the two armies to announce the armistice, they were wounded before the troops could be prevailed on to desist from mutual slaughter.¹

In effect, the Archduke Charles had, on the preceding night, sent Prince John of Lichtenstein to the Emperor's headquarters to propose an armistice ; but Napoleon was unwilling to accept it, till he had enjoyed an opportunity of observing in person the situation of the armies. The motives which led the Austrian cabinet to take this step were sufficiently obvious. The policy of that government always has been to avoid pushing matters to an extremity: to come to an accommodation before the chances of war have become desperate ; to consider the preservation of the army the grand object, and trust, by maintaining it entire, to regain at some future time the advantages which may be lost at the moment by yielding to the storm. Considering another battle, therefore, as endangering the existence of the empire, and the result of the former not so decisive as to induce the enemy to refuse reasonable terms of accommodation,² they deemed it the more prudent course to propose an armistice while

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

66.
Advance of
Marmont,
and conclu-
sion of the
armistice of
Znaym.¹ Pel. iv. 272,
274. Thib. vi.
350. Sav. iv.
124, 125.67.
Motives
which led
the Austri-
ans to this
step.² Pel. iv. 274,
278. Stut.
388, 390.
Jom. iii. 283.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

yet the forces of the monarchy were entire, the more especially as the retreat from Wagram was not likely to induce Prussia to adopt a decisive course, and the long-promised armament of Great Britain had not yet left the harbours of the Channel.

68.
Arguments
against the
armistice at
the French
headquarters.

It was not, however, till Napoleon had himself seen the positions of the contending armies, and was satisfied that the Austrians, at the moment, had the advantage, as well in the position as the concentration of their troops, that he resolved to accede to the suspension of arms.* A council of war was afterwards held, attended by all the marshals, in the Emperor's tent, in which the important point was debated, whether the armistice should be agreed to. Opinions were much divided, and the discussion was prolonged till a very late hour. On the one side, it was contended by Berthier and the advocates for a continuance of hostilities, that it was of the last importance to take advantage of the reinforcements which had already come up, or were likely to arrive during the night, to commence a general attack on the enemy, and finish the war on the following day at a blow ; that his position around Znaym, though strong, was not impregnable ; that Austria was the irreconcilable enemy of France under the new régime ; and that, unless deprived of the power of again injuring her, she would never cease to violate the most solemn treaties, when it suited her own convenience, or there was a prospect of advantage from even the most flagrant violation of the public faith : that if, by retiring in the night, as present appearances rendered probable, the Archduke should succeed in regaining Bohemia, and uniting to his standards the forces of that province, the Emperor could summon to his aid the corps of Lefebvre, Junot, and Jerome, and the advantage would still remain on his side : that it was indispensable to put an end to these coalitions perpetually springing up, by overpowering Austria, which was the centre of them all ; that this was a point of much more importance than finishing the war in Spain ; and that no sooner would the Emperor, for that purpose, enter the Peninsula,¹ than a new coalition would

¹ Thib. vii. 350. Bign. viii. 310.

* "Oudinot, and the reserve from Wolkersdorf, could not come up till the following morning : it was material not to allow the enemy to perceive his superiority at that moment."—THIBAUDEAU, vii. 350.

spring up in his rear, which would embrace all the northern powers.

On the other hand, it was contended by the advocates of peace, that if Prince Charles retreated, as he unquestionably might do, during the night, and gained the Bohemian mountains, there was every reason to fear a general conflagration in Germany, an open declaration from Prussia, and probably the ultimate adhesion of Russia itself: that it was evident from present appearances, not less than past events, that the real danger of France lay in the north; that an entirely new system of Russian policy had been brought to light in the course of the contest; and that, in anticipation of the grand and final conflict between the south and the north, which was evidently approaching, it was of the last importance not merely to spare but to conciliate Austria, and, by terminating the war in the Peninsula, not only secure the rear of France, but liberate two hundred thousand of its best soldiers from an inglorious but murderous warfare. The Emperor, after hearing, according to his usual custom, both sides patiently, more fully aware than many of his generals of the precarious footing on which he stood with Russia, inclined to the latter side, and broke up the conference with the decisive words—"Enough of blood has been shed: I accept the armistice."¹

No great difficulty was experienced in fixing the line of demarcation between the districts to be occupied by the two armies; their relative position, and the principle *uti possidetis*, afforded too clear a rule for drawing the line between them. The French were permitted to retain possession of all Upper Austria, as far as the borders of Bohemia, including the circles of Znaim and Brunn; the whole district embraced by the course of the Morava as far as its confluence with the Taya; thence by the high-road to Presburg, including that town; the course of the Danube as far as Raab, the river of that name, and thence by the frontiers of Styria and Carniola to Fiume. On this principle, the citadels of Gratz and Brunn, the fort of Sassenberg, the whole districts of the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, were to be surrendered to their arms. It was a third in point of extent, and more than a half in point of military strength, of the whole empire.² The armies in Poland

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

69.
And for
peace; which
Napoleon
adopts.

¹ Pel. iv. 275.
277. Bign.
viii. 310.
Thib. vii.
350.

70.
Limits
assigned to
the two
armies by the
armistice.
July 12

² See armistice. Marten's Sup. v. 209. Moniteur, July 20,

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

were to retain their respective positions; in western and northern Germany, the limits between the two powers were to be those of the states composing the Confederation of the Rhine.

71.
Hesitation of
the Emperor
of Austria to
sign the
armistice,
which is only
done on the
18th.
Heavy con-
tribution
levied on
Austria.
July 13.

July 14.

The armistice was concluded by the Archduke Charles alone, in virtue of the powers reposed in him as general-issimo, but subject to the ratification of the Emperor. The cabinet of Vienna, which at that period was assembled at Komorn in Hungary, had considerable difficulty in giving their consent to it. It was proposed to take advantage of the distance of the French troops to act on the right bank of the Danube: to unite the forces of Giulay and the Archduke John with those of the Hungarian insurrection, and move towards Styria and Tyrol, so as to threaten the French communications; while the Archduke Charles, by retreating towards Bohemia, drew the bulk of their forces to a distance from their only base of operations. In pursuance of these views, which for a few days prevailed at the Imperial headquarters, directions were sent to the Archduke John to "disregard any orders regarding an armistice which did not bear the sign-manual of the Emperor, and to take his instructions from him alone." In the course of the two following days, however, Prince Lichtenstein arrived from the headquarters of the Archduke Charles, and inspired more moderate views. The court, yielding to necessity, and desirous of gaining time to recruit its armies, await the progress of events in Spain, and the effect of the long expected English armament in the north of Germany, gave a reluctant consent; the armistice was signed by the Emperor on the 18th, and the flames of war were quenched in Germany, till they broke out with awful violence three years afterwards on the banks of the Niemen. The Austrian people were not long in receiving a bitter proof of the reality of their subjugation. On the very day after the armistice was concluded, a decree of Napoleon's imposed a war contribution of 237,800,000 francs (£9,500,000) on the provinces occupied by the French armies, which were not a half of the monarchy; a burden at least as great, considering the relative wealth and value of money in the two countries, as an imposition of fifty millions sterling would be on Great Britain.¹

¹ Pel. iv. 283.
284. Sav. iv.
126. Jom.
iii. 285.
Decree,
July 13.
Montg. vii.
430.

The battle of Wagram bears a striking resemblance to two of the most memorable that have occurred in ancient or modern times—those of Cannæ and Waterloo. In all the three, the one party made a grand effort at the centre of his antagonist, and the final issue of each battle was owing to the success or failure of the measures adopted to defeat this central attack, by a united movement against the wings of the enemy. At Cannæ, as already noticed, it was the pushing forward of the Roman centre, in column, into the middle of the Carthaginian army, followed by the turning of both their flanks by the Numidian cavalry, which brought about their ruin. At Aspern, the defeat of the French on the second day was owing to a similar hazardous advance of the French centre in close column into the middle of the Austrian line, which skilfully receded, and brought the French columns into the centre of a converging fire of a prodigious artillery.* At Waterloo, the final defeat of the French was owing to the steadiness of the English Guards, which in line arrested the advance of the Imperial Guard in column; while the concentric fire of the British batteries advanced in the close of the day into a kind of semicircle, and the simultaneous charge of a brigade of cavalry on the one side of the attacking mass, and a line of infantry on the other, completed the final destruction of that formidable body. At Wagram the Archduke had, on a still more extended scale, prepared the means of repelling the anticipated central attack of the French in column, and converting it into the cause of total ruin. The batteries and troops in the centre were so disposed, that their awful fire at length arrested Macdonald's intrepid column; Aspern and Essling were captured on one flank; the Archduke John, with thirty thousand fresh troops, was destined to turn the other. To all appearance, the greatest defeat recorded in history awaited the French Emperor; when the tardiness of that prince proved as fatal to the House of Hapsburg as a similar delay on Grouchy's part was to Napoleon himself at Waterloo, and victory was snatched from the grasp of the Austrian eagles when they seemed on the very point of seizing it.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

72.

Comparison
of the battle
of Wagram
with those of
Cannæ and
Waterloo.

* *Ante*, Chap. lvi. § 66.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

73.

Reflections
on the cam-
paign, and its
glorious
character to
Austria.

The campaign of Aspern and Wagram is the most glorious in the Austrian annals; the most memorable example of patriotic resistance recorded in the history of the world. When we recollect that in the short space of three months were comprised the desperate contest in Bavaria, the victory of Aspern, the war in the Tyrol, the doubtful fight of Wagram, we are at a loss whether to admire most the vital strength of a monarchy which, so soon after the disasters of Ulm and Austerlitz, was capable of such gigantic efforts—the noble spirit which prompted its people so unanimously to make such unheard-of exertions—or the firm resolution of the chiefs who, undismayed by reverses which would have crushed any other government to dust, maintained an undaunted front to the very last. We admire the courage of Darius, who, after the loss of half his provinces, still fought with heroic resolution against the Macedonian conqueror on the field of Arbela; we exult in the firmness of the Roman senate, which, yet bleeding with the slaughter of Cannæ, sent forth legions to Spain, and sold the ground on which Hannibal was encamped, when his standards crowded round the walls of the city; and we anticipate already the voice of ages in awarding the praise of unconquerable resolution to the Russian nation, which, undeterred by the carnage of Borodino, burned the ancient capital of the empire rather than permit it to become the resting-place of its enemies, and, when pierced to the heart, still stretched forth its mighty arms from Finland to the Danube to envelop and crush the invader. But, without underrating these glorious examples of patriotic resistance, it may safely be affirmed that none of them will bear a comparison with that exhibited by Austria in this memorable campaign.

74.

Other
empires have
all sunk with
the fall of the
capital.

Other empires have almost invariably succumbed upon the capture of the capital. Carthage was crushed by the storm of its metropolis by Scipio Africanus; Rome sank at once with the fall of the Eternal City before the Gothic trumpet; with the conquest of Constantinople the lower empire perished; the seizure of Berlin by the allies under the Great Frederick was but a transient incursion, its lasting occupation by Napoleon proved fatal to the strength of the monarchy; France, during its Republican

fervour, was nearly overthrown by the charge of fifteen hundred Prussian hussars on the plains of Champagne,* and twice saw its strength totally paralysed by the fall of its capital in 1814 and 1815; Russia survived the capture of Moscow only by the aid of a rigorous climate and the overwhelming force of its Scythian cavalry. Austria is the only state recorded in history which, without any such advantages, fought two desperate battles in defence of its independence AFTER its capital had fallen! To this glorious and unique distinction the Imperial annals may justly lay claim; and those who affect to condemn its institutions, and despise its national character, would do well to examine the annals of the world for a similar instance of patriotic resolution, and search their own hearts for the feelings and the devotion requisite for its repetition.

In truth, the invincible tenacity with which both the Austrian nobility and people maintained the conflict, under circumstances of adversity which, in every other instance recorded in history, had subdued the minds of men, affords at once a decisive refutation of the opinion so industriously propagated and heedlessly received in this country, as to the despotic and oppressive nature of the Imperial rule, and the most memorable example of the capability of an aristocratic form of government to impart to the community under its direction a degree of consistency and resolution of which mankind under no other circumstances are capable. It was not general misery which caused the Tyrolese to start unanimously to arms at the call of the Austrian trumpet, and combat the invader with stone balls discharged from larch-trees bored into the form of cannon: it was not oppressive rule which called forth the sublime devotion of Aspern and Wagram. No people ever were so often defeated as the Austrians were during the course of the Revolutionary war; but none rose with such vigour from the ground, or exhibited in such vivid colours the power of moral principle to withstand the shocks of fortune; to compensate, by firmness of purpose, the superior intellectual acquisitions of other states; and communicate to men that

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

75.
Proof thereby
afforded of
the practical
blessings of
the Austrian
government.

* *Ante*, Chap. x. § 23.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

76.
Great degree
of material
prosperity in
Austria
Proper.1 Personal
Observation.

unconquerable resolution which brings them in the end victorious through the severest earthly trials.

The aspect of Austria Proper, especially in its mountainous regions, confirms and explains this extraordinary phenomenon. In no other country, perhaps, is so uncommon a degree of well-being to be seen among the peasantry; nowhere are the fruits of the earth divided in apparently such equitable proportions between the landlord and the cultivator; nowhere does ease and contentment prevail so universally in the dwellings of the poor.¹ When it is recollected that this general prosperity prevails in a country where the taxation is so light as to be almost imperceptible by the great body of the people, and where the proportion of persons instructed is, on an average of the whole empire, equal to that in any state of similar dimensions in Europe, and as high in some provinces as the best educated nations of the world,* it must be admitted that the philanthropist has much cause to linger with satisfaction on its contemplation. It is on a different class, on the middle class and the aspiring children of the burghers, that the restrictions of the Imperial sway are hereafter destined to hang heavy: but at this period no heart-burnings arose from the exclusions to which they were subject, and one only passion, that of ardent devotion to their country, animated all classes of the people.

77.
Causes of the
extraordinary
public virtue
thus ex-
hibited in
Austria.

But the example of Austria in 1809, has afforded another and still more interesting lesson to mankind. That country had at that period no pretensions to intellectual superiority. Commerce, manufactures, and the mechanical arts, had made little progress over its surface; literature was in its infancy; science flourished only in a few favoured spots, under the fostering care of Imperial patronage; poetry, history, philosophy, were to the great mass of the inhabitants almost unknown. It had long and painfully felt the consequences of this inferiority in the bloody contests it had been compelled to maintain

* One in fifteen of the population over the whole empire attend the elementary schools; in some provinces, as Upper Austria, the Tyrol, and Bohemia, the proportion is as high as 1 in 11. In Switzerland, it is now 1 in 10; in Ireland, 1 in 9; in Scotland, 1 in 11; in France, 1 in 17; in Prussia, 1 in 10; in Spain, 1 in 350; in Poland, 1 in 100; in Russia, 1 in 794.—See MORREAU, *Stat. de la Grande Bretagne*, II. 333, 334.

with the democratic energy and scientific ability of the French Revolution. How, then, did it happen that a state, so little qualified by intellectual superiority to contend with the gigantic powers of wickedness, should have stood forth with such unparalleled lustre in the contest; should have resisted alone, with such heroic bravery, the military force of half of Europe, guided by consummate ability and trained by unparalleled conquests; and, for the first time since the commencement of the struggle, made the scales hang even between the conservative and revolutionary principles? Simply because she possessed a pure, virtuous, and single-minded people; because, whatever the corruptions of the capital may have been, the heart of the nation was untainted; because an indulgent rule had attached the nobility to their sovereign, and experienced benefits the peasantry to their landlords; because patriotism was there established upon its only durable basis, a sense of moral obligation and the force of religious duty.

And in this respect France, in the time of her adversity, exhibited a memorable contrast to Austria in the hour of her national trial. When the evil days fell upon her, when the barrier of the Rhine was forced, and hostile standards approached the gates of Paris, the boasted virtues of republicanism disappeared; the brilliant energy of military courage was found unequal to the shock. Province after province sank without performing one deed worthy of remembrance: city after city surrendered without leaving one trace on the page of history. No French Saragossa proved that patriotism can supply the want of ramparts; no revolutionary La Vendée, that the civic virtues can dispense with Christian enthusiasm; no second Tyrol, that even imperial strength fail against the "might that slumbers in a peasant's arm." The strength of the empire was in the army alone: with the fall of its capital the power of the Revolution was at an end: the marshals and generals, true to the real idol of worldly adoration, ranged themselves on the side of success.* The conqueror of a hun-

CHAP.
LIX.
1809.

78.
Remarkable
contrast
afterwards
exhibited by
France.

* "The galleries and saloons," says Caulaincourt, "which adjoined the apartment of the Emperor at Fontainebleau (in April 1814) were deserted. The marshals had carried with them their brilliant staffs: the wind of adversity had blown, and the glittering crowd had vanished. That solitude thrilled the

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

dred fights was left almost alone by the creatures of his bounty; and, as with the sorcerers who crowded round the statue of Eblis, when the idol was pierced to the heart by the son of Hodeirah, "the ocean vault fell in, and all were crushed."

79.
Elevation of
the Austrian
character
from past
calamities.

These considerations, in a certain degree, lift up the veil which conceals from mortal eyes the ultimate designs of Providence in the wars which so often desolate the world. If we compare Austria as she was in 1793 with Austria in 1809, we seem not merely to be dealing with a different people, but with a different age of the world. In the first era is to be seen nothing but selfishness and vacillation in the national councils, lukewarmness and indifference in the public feeling, irresolution and disgrace in military events. But it is well for nations not less than individuals to be in affliction. Turn to the same nation in 1809, and behold her undaunted in the cabinet, unconquered in the field; glowing in every quarter with patriotism, teeming in every direction with energy; firm in her faith, generous in her resolutions; maintaining unshaken constancy to her principles amidst unheard-of disasters, fidelity to her sovereign amidst unbounded temptations. This is indeed regeneration, this is true national glory, purchased in the only school of real improvement, the paths of suffering.

80.
Glorious
position Aus-
tria now
occupied.

How many centuries of national existence did Austria go through before this mighty change was effected; how many national sins did she expiate; what a gleam of glory, not merely in imperial but in human annals, has she left! She is to reappear in the contest for Europe.

heart. The redoubted chief who so lately had never moved except surrounded by a magnificent cortege, the great monarch who had seen kings at his feet, is now only a simple individual, disinherited even of the interest and care of his friends! All was desolate, all was solitary in that splendid palace. I felt the necessity of withdrawing the Emperor from so fearful a torture. 'Have you got every thing ready for my departure?'—'Yes, Sir!'—'My poor Caulaincourt, you discharge here the functions of grand-marshal: could you have conceived it? Berthier has gone off without even bidding me adieu!'—'What, Sir!' exclaimed I, 'Berthier also, the creature of your bounty!'—'Berthier,' replied the Emperor, 'was born a courtier: you will soon see my vice-constable a mendicant for employment from the Bourbons. I feel humiliated, that the men whom I have raised so high in the eyes of Europe should have sunk so low! What have they made of that atmosphere of glory in which they appeared enveloped in the eyes of the stranger? What must the sovereigns think of all these men illustrious by my reign?'—Such was the fidelity and gratitude of the Revolution; its genius, its intellect, its glory! Contrast this with Austria after Aspern—with the devotion of Wagram, and the heroism of the Tyrol.—See CAULAINCOURT'S *Memoirs*, II. 109, 111.

freedom ; but she is to reappear as a conqueror, invested with irresistible strength, arrayed in impenetrable panoply : she shared the glories of Leipsic with Russia and Prussia ; but the heroism of Aspern, the constancy of Wagram, are her own. Mankind have little concern with the mere conquest of one nation by another : it is the triumph of virtue over misfortune, of duty over selfishness, of religion over infidelity, which is the real patrimony of the human race. The heroic constancy, the generous fidelity of all classes in Austria at the close of the contest, was placed by Providence in bright contrast to the treachery and selfishness of the French Revolutionists, as if to demonstrate the inability of the greatest intellectual acquisitions to communicate that elevation to the character which springs from the prevalence of moral feeling, and to show that even the conquerors of the world were unequal to a crisis which religion had rendered of easy endurance to the shepherds of the Alps.

CHAP.
LIX.

1809.

CHAPTER LX.

WALCHEREN EXPEDITION—PEACE OF VIENNA—SECOND WAR
IN THE TYROL—DETHRONEMENT OF THE POPE.CHAP.
LX.

1800.

1.
Vast capabilities of the
Scheldt for
commerce.

NATURE has formed the Scheldt to be the rival of the Thames. Of equal magnitude and depth with its renowned competitor, flowing through a country excelling even the midland counties of England in wealth and resources, adjoining cities long superior to any in Europe in arts and commerce; the artery at once of Flanders and Holland, of Brabant and Luxemburg, it is fitted to be the great organ of communication between the fertile fields and rich manufacturing towns of the Low Countries and the other maritime states of the world. If it is not equally celebrated as the Thames in history or romance; if all the vessels of the ocean do not crowd its quays, and its merchants are not sought by the princes of the earth; if it does not give law to all the quarters of the globe, and boast a colonial empire on which the sun never sets, it is not because Nature has denied it the physical advantages conducive to such exalted destinies, but because the jealousies and perverseness of man have in great part marred her choicest gifts. Flanders was a great and highly-civilised manufacturing state, when England was still struggling between the coarse plenty of Anglo-Saxon rudeness and the insulting oppression of Norman chivalry; even in the days of Edward III. and the Black Prince, the Brewer of Ghent was the esteemed ally of princes, and the political passions of our times had been warmed into being by the long-established prosperity of a commercial community;

their territory was the richest, the best peopled, the most adorned by cities in Christendom; and the fine arts, arising in the wane of ancient opulence, had already produced the immortal works of Teniers, Rubens, and Vandyke, when the school of England was as yet hardly emerged from the obscurity of infant years.

CHAP.
LX.
1800.

ANTWERP, the key of this great estuary, gradually rose with the increasing commerce of the Low Countries, until, at the period of the Reformation, it numbered two hundred thousand inhabitants within its walls, and engrossed the whole trade of these beautiful provinces. Its noble harbour, capable of containing a thousand vessels; its extensive ramparts and citadel, among the strongest in Europe; its splendid cathedral, exceeding even St Paul's in elevation;* its magnificent quays, bordering a river five hundred yards in breadth, which a seventy-four gun ship might navigate with safety—all conspire to render this city one of the most renowned in Europe. If the seventeen provinces had remained united under one government, and the Scheldt had continued to be the artery of communication between their admirable territory, their noble cities, and the rest of the world, it must, by this time, have been one of the greatest emporiums in existence, and possibly would have borne away the palm from London itself in wealth and grandeur. But religious persecution first rent asunder that beautiful dominion, and political jealousy next completed the bars which Catholic oppression had erected against its advancement. The revolt of Holland was the natural consequence of the atrocities of the Duke of Alva, and the massacre of fifty thousand Protestants, on the scaffold and at the stake, by the Spanish government. The closing of the mouth of the Scheldt, by the political and commercial jealousy of the Dutch,¹ was the inevitable result and deserved punishment of the abominable cruelty

2.
Former
grandeur and
present im-
portance of
Antwerp.

¹ Malto
Brun, viii.
618, 619.

* It is four hundred and fifty-one feet high; the roof of the cathedral is three hundred and sixty feet from the pavement; but more even than for these gigantic proportions it is fitted to arrest the traveller's admiration as containing the masterpieces of Rubens, the Taking Down and Elevating on the Cross. Sir Joshua Reynolds justly observed, that whoever had not seen the great works of Rubens at Antwerp, could form no adequate idea either of the genius of that great artist or the power of art. The paintings in the Museum, especially those by Rubens and Vandyke, are inimitable.—MALTE BRUN, viii. 618; REYNOLDS'S *Tour in Flanders—Works*, ii. 264, 300; and *Personal Observation*.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

3.
Napoleon's
designs for its
amplifica-
tion.

which converted their most industrious and valuable subjects into successful rivals and inveterate enemies.

Amidst all its degradation, however, and when its population had sunk to sixty thousand inhabitants, the eagle glance of Napoleon at once discerned the vast natural advantages and incalculable political importance of this city. No sooner had it attracted his attention, than he resolved to make it one of the greatest bulwarks of his dominions; the grand naval and military arsenal of northern Europe; the advanced post from which he might launch the thunders of his arms against the independence and existence of England. Under his vigorous administration, every thing soon assumed a new aspect: the subjection of Holland to the imperial sway had already extinguished, if not the commercial jealousy of the Dutch, at least their power of interfering with the prosperity of their Flemish rival; the vessels which they had sunk at the mouth of the Scheldt, to impede its navigation, were raised; the sand-banks which had been accumulating for centuries were cleared away; new bulwarks were annexed to the works, already formidable, of the citadel; vast wet docks were added to the harbour, capable of containing forty ships of the line; and an arsenal adequate to the equipment of half the navy of France was constructed. Great as are these works, however, and durably as they will remain monuments of the grandeur of conception and prophetic spirit of the French Emperor, they were but a small part of what he had intended for this favoured bulwark of the empire. "The works hither erected," said Napoleon at St Helena, "were nothing to what I intended at Antwerp. The whole sandy plain, which now stretches for miles behind the Tête de Flandre on the left bank of the river, was to have been enclosed by fortifications, and formed into a vast city; the imperial dockyards and basins, the arsenal and magazines, were to have been constructed there; those on the right bank were to have been given up to private merchants. Antwerp was to me a province in itself. It is one of the chief causes of my exile to St Helena; for the required cession of that fortress was my principal reason for refusing peace at Chatillon. If they would have left it to me, peace would have been concluded.¹ France

¹ *Les Causes*,
vii. 43, 44,
56, 57.

without Antwerp and the frontiers of the Rhine is nothing."

Antwerp is the point from which, in every age, the independence of these kingdoms has been seriously menaced. When the Duke of Parma prepared a land force in the time of Queen Elizabeth to overthrow the liberties of England and the Protestant faith, it was in the Scheldt and at Ostend that all his preparations were made. It was neither from Boulogne nor Cherbourg, from Brest nor Toulon, that Napoleon, after his profound naval combinations of 1805 had been defeated, intended to invade the British isles. The Scheldt was the point of attack; Antwerp and Flushing were the strongholds in which sixty sail of the line were to be prepared as the centre of that mighty squadron, which, by a second battle of Actium, was to strike down the mistress of the seas. A vast and skilful system of internal communication had been brought to bear upon this point, and enabled the French to bring together there their naval stores and seamen without incurring the hazard of a coast-wise navigation. Sensible of her danger, it had been the fixed policy of Great Britain, for centuries, to prevent this formidable outwork against her independence from falling into the hands of her enemies; and the best days of her history are chiefly occupied with the struggle to ward off such a disaster. It was for this that William fought and Marlborough conquered; that Nelson died and Wellington triumphed; that Chatham lighted a conflagration in every quarter of the globe, and Pitt braved all the dangers of the Revolutionary war.

It is one of the most singular facts in the history of mankind, that the English government, after having for a hundred and fifty years contended for the attainment of this object, and at length secured it, by the restoration, under the guarantee of the European powers, of the seventeen provinces into one united dominion, should have voluntarily, within twenty years afterwards, undone the work of its own hands; aided in the partition of the Netherlands into two separate states, each incapable of maintaining its independence, one of which necessarily fell under the dominion of her enemies; and at length actually joined her fleets

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

4.
Efforts
always made
by England
to keep this
great strong-
hold from
France.

5.
Extraordi-
nary infatua-
tion which
has led to its
abandonment
in later times.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

to the Gallic revolutionary armies to restore Antwerp, the great stronghold prepared by Napoleon for our subjugation, to the son-in-law of the monarch of France, and the sway of the tricolor flag! Such a proceeding would be unparalleled in history, if it were not equalled, perhaps exceeded, by the refusal at the same time to lend any assistance to the Grand Seignior, then reduced to the last straits by the defeat of Koniah, and consequent abandonment of him to the arms of Russia, who failed not, as the price of protection, to exact the humiliating treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, and the exclusion of the British flag from the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. Thus, in our anxiety to restore Antwerp, the fulcrum from which our independence is to be assailed in Western Europe, to France, we have surrendered Constantinople, the bulwark of the East, the key of our Eastern dominions, to Russia! The simultaneous occurrence of two such acts on the part of government, without any mark of disapprobation save from the reflecting few in the country, proves that there are occasions in which, under the influence of faction and in the heat of political contest, a nation may not only lose its reason, but become insensible to the strongest even of all animal instincts, that of self-preservation.

6.
Proposals of
Austria for a
British diversion.

At the commencement of the contest in Germany, the cabinet of Vienna made the most urgent representations to the British government on the subject of a powerful diversion by an English land force in the north of Germany, whither the Austrian Grand Army was originally destined, and where so many ardent spirits, smarting under humiliation and oppression, were waiting only the appearance of an external armed force to raise the standard of general insurrection. They proposed that a diversion should be attempted by an expedition of Anglo-Sicilian troops on the coasts of Italy; that the military operations in the Peninsula should be continued; and that a strong effort should be made towards the mouth of the Elbe. There can be no question that the disposable forces of England, at this juncture, were equal to these operations, extensive though they were; for she had a hundred thousand regular troops, which could be ordered on foreign service, in the British islands; forty thou-

sand of whom, in Spain, under Wellington, forty thousand in the north of Germany, and twenty thousand in the Mediterranean, would have occasioned no small embarrassment to the French Emperor, especially after he was obliged to concentrate all his forces from the extremities of his dominions, for the decisive struggle on the banks of the Danube. Domestic danger could not be alleged as a reason for declining to make such an effort; for the British islands, encircled by their invincible fleets, garrisoned by eighty thousand admirable regular, and three hundred thousand local militia, and animated with an enthusiastic military spirit, were beyond the reach of attack. Nor was time wanting; for the British government was, in November 1808, in full possession of the resolution of the cabinet of Vienna to declare war: it was communicated to the world in the king's speech on the 15th December of that year; and hostilities were not commenced on the Inn till the 9th April following, before which time the grand expedition for the north of the vast theatre of operations might have been ready to sail from the British harbours.¹

In this momentous crisis the cabinet of St James's was not wanting to itself, or to the noble position assigned to it in the contest of nations. Undiscouraged by the disastrous issue of Sir John Moore's expedition, they resolved not only to resume the contest with increased vigour in the Spanish peninsula, but to aid the common cause by a powerful demonstration in the north of Europe. Many reasons concurred, however, in dissuading them from adopting the proposed plan of landing in the north of Germany. Matters were entirely changed since the year 1807, when such a direction of our force was attempted; and when, if brought to the scene of action some months earlier, it might have been attended with important, perhaps decisive effects. Prussia was then in arms against France; Denmark was neutral; Russia engrossed the attention of Napoleon's principal army on the Vistula or the Alle; and Austria, collecting her strength in Bohemia, was prepared, on the first serious reverse, to fall with overwhelming force on his line of communication. Now every thing was changed. The north of Germany, strewn with the wrecks of independent states,

¹ Mr Can-
ning's
Speech, Parl.
Deb. xvi. 352.

7.
Reasons for
not sending
the expedi-
tion to the
north of
Germany or
Spain.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

with its principal strongholds in the hands of the enemy, could no longer be relied on for efficient co-operation with a regular army; Russia, instead of being the enemy of France, was now her obsequious ally; Denmark was animated by a spirit of more than ordinary hostility to Great Britain; and though the inclination of Prussia to extricate herself from her fetters could not be doubted, yet her military resources were severely crippled, her strongest fortresses were in the possession of the conqueror, and her government had suffered so severely from their recent ill-advised effort, that there was every reason to fear that they would now adhere to their old system of selfish indecision. A powerful army, if landed at San Sebastian, might, indeed, paralyse all the imperial forces in Spain, and occasion the evacuation of the whole Peninsula by the troops of Napoleon. But the effect of such remote success would be inconsiderable on the vital line of operations in the valley of the Danube; and if the French Emperor were there successful, he would soon regain his lost footing beyond the Pyrenees, and securely complete, with undiminished strength, from Gibraltar to Hamburg, his vast naval preparations for our subjugation.¹

¹ Mr Can-
ning's
Speech, Parl.
Deb. xvi. 333,
336. Lord
Castlereagh's, *ibid.*
99, 103.

8.
Reasons for
selecting the
Scheldt as the
point of
attack.

On the other hand, a variety of considerations equally powerful concurred to recommend Antwerp as the grand point of attack. Its formidable strength and increasing importance as a great naval station and arsenal, its close proximity to the British shores, the anxiety which Napoleon had evinced for its extension—pointed it out as the quarter from which, more than any other, serious danger was to be apprehended. Its fortifications, though extensive and formidable, if in good condition, were in a state hardly susceptible of defence; there was scarcely any water in the ditches; the rampart, unarmed with cannon, was in many places dilapidated and tottering; and the garrison, consisting of little more than two thousand invalids and coast-guards, was altogether unequal to the defence of its extensive works. The regular army of France was so completely absorbed by the war on the Danube and that in the Peninsula, that no considerable force could be assembled for its relief: and although, if operations in form were to be attempted, an

immense body of national guards would doubtless converge to the threatened point, yet there was a fair prospect of carrying the town at once by escalade, almost before the intelligence of its danger could reach the government at Paris. Immense would be the effect, moral as well as material, of such a victory. It would demonstrate that even the territory of the great nation, and its strongest fortresses, were not beyond the reach of attack ; roll back on France the terrors of invasion ; destroy at once the principal naval resources and fleets of the enemy ; animate all the north of Germany by the sight of a powerful army having gained a firm footing on their own shores ; and intercept, by pressing dangers at home, a large portion of the reinforcements destined for the Grand Army. Even if Austria were finally to succumb, still the results gained would be immense. The most cherished naval establishment of the enemy would be destroyed ; the centre of his maritime operations ruined ; and his projected naval crusade against Great Britain thrown back for several years, if not rendered altogether abortive. Sound policy, therefore, recommended such a direction of our hostility as, while it powerfully aided our allies, was conducive also to our own safety ; and which, increasing the chance of a successful combination against France on the Danube, provided at the same time for the case of the imperial eagles returning, as heretofore, laden with the spoils of Germany, to their menacing position on the heights of Boulogne.¹

¹ Mr Can-
ning's Speech,
Parl. Deb.
xvi. 338, 347.

But, though the cabinet of St James's thus judged rightly in selecting Antwerp as the point of attack, and magnanimously in resolving to put forth the whole strength of the British empire, without sharing in the general panic produced by the calamitous termination of Sir John Moore's expedition ; yet, in one vital point, they still proved themselves novices in combination, uninstructed by the military experience even of sixteen years. Although the Austrians crossed the Inn on the 9th March, though the battle of Echmuhl was fought on the 21st April, and that of Aspern on the 22d May, it was not till the end of the latter month that any serious preparations began to be made by ministers for an expedition to lighten the load which had for two months been pressing on the Imperial forces. They were deterred by a com-

9.
Unhappy de-
lay in the
expedition.

CHAP.
LX.
1809

munication received from the commander-in-chief, Sir D. Dundas, on the 22d of March preceding, shortly after the broken bands of Sir John Moore's army had returned from Spain, stating that fifteen thousand men could not be spared from the home service for any foreign expedition. That veteran officer in making, and government in acting on such a statement, alike proved themselves unequal to the station which they occupied in the grand struggle. To accomplish the vital object of beginning the campaign *simultaneously* with the Austrians, and distracting the enemy by a descent on the Scheldt, at the same time that the Archduke Charles entered Bavaria, no sacrifices could have been too great. Even if not a bayonet could have been got from the regular army, every man of the Guards should have been sent, and half of the militia invited to volunteer; and in this way fifty thousand admirable soldiers might with ease have been collected. It was not by never diminishing the usual domestic garrisons, and reckoning none disposable but those who had no home service to perform, that Napoleon carried the French standards to Vienna and the Kremlin.¹

¹ See Sir D. Dundas's Evidence, Parl. Deb. xv. 85, 86. App.

10.
The expedition is resolved on in the end of May, and on a very great scale.

No serious steps were taken, after this abortive inquiry as to the disposable British force, to resume the expedition till the 8th of June, when the muster-rolls of all the regiments in the British islands having been obtained, and shown a disposable force of forty thousand men, preparations in good earnest were commenced. It was still possible to bring them to bear with great effect on the vital operations on the Danube: for the news of the battle of Aspern had just reached this country, and at the same time it was ascertained, by authentic evidence, that Antwerp was in the most defenceless state; that the garrisons consisted only of two thousand four hundred men, of whom only fifteen hundred were soldiers, the remainder being invalids or artificers; that there were two small breaches on the ramparts, and that the bastions in general were not armed; that the wet ditch was fordable in some places, and only ten thousand soldiers remained in Holland, and hardly any in Flanders. But the inherent vice of procrastination still paralysed the British councils. Though every day and hour was precious, when the Scheldt was defenceless and Napoleon defeated on the

Danube, no orders were given to the ordnance department to prepare battering trains till the 19th June ; and though their preparations were complete, and the navy in readiness by the end of that month, the expedition did not sail till the 28th July, upwards of a week after the result of the battle of Wagram had been known in the British islands. When it is considered that the sea voyage from the Downs to the Scheldt does not occupy above thirty hours ; that the British had thirty-five sail of the line, and transports innumerable at hand for the embarkation ; that Marshal Ney embarked twenty-five thousand men, with all their artillery, in ten minutes ; that Napoleon, who gave his orders to the Grand Army to break up from Boulogne on the 1st September 1805, beheld them on the Rhine on the 23d of the same month, and saw Mack defile before him as a prisoner, with all his army, on the 20th October ; it must be admitted that, notwithstanding all they had suffered from this defect, the British government were still characterised rather by the slowness of the Anglo-Saxon, than the fire of the Norman character.¹

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

¹ Sir T. Triggis's Evid. Parl. Deb. xv. 138, and xvi. 111, 119. Lord Castlereagh's speech, and Gen. Craufurd's, *ibid.* 222

When the expedition, however, even at the eleventh hour, did sail from the British islands, it was on a scale worthy both of the mistress of the seas, and of one of the greatest military powers in Europe. The armament, consisting of thirty-seven ships of the line, twenty-three frigates, thirty-three sloops, eighty-two gun-boats, besides transports innumerable ; and having on board thirty-nine thousand sabres and bayonets, equivalent to above forty-one thousand of all arms, with two battering trains and all their stores complete, contained above a hundred thousand combatants, and was the largest and best equipped that ever put to sea in modern times. What might it not have accomplished, if conducted with vigour and directed by skill ! With a British force of little greater amount, Wellington struck down the empire of France on the field of Waterloo.^{2*}

11. Balling and immense magnitude of the expedition.

² See the Details in Parl. Pap. Deb. xv. 5 and 6.

* The exact British force, with the King's German Legion, at Waterloo, was :

Infantry,	.	.	.	.	29,715
Cavalry,	.	.	.	.	8,219
Artillery,	.	.	.	.	5,434

Total, 43,368

sabres and bayonets, or about 45,000, including officers and non-commissioned officers.—See *Adjutant-General's Returns*, 6th Nov. 1816, quoted in *Jones's Waterloo*, 138 ; *Near Observer*, vol. ii.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

12.
Landing in
Holland, and
great early
success of the
expedition.
July 30.

July 30.

Aug. 1.

Aug. 2.

This stupendous armament, which whitened the ocean with its sails, arrived on the coast of Holland on the 29th of July. On the following day, twenty thousand men were disembarked in the isle of Walcheren, and speedily took possession of Middleburg, its chief town, besides driving the French troops into the walls of Flushing. At the same time another division landed in Cadsand, and, expelling the enemy from that island, opened the way for the passage of the fleet up the western or principal branch of the Scheldt. Some days afterwards, Sir Richard Strachan, who commanded the naval force, disregarding the distant and ineffectual fire of the Flushing batteries, passed the straits with eighteen ships of the line, and soon both branches of the Scheldt were crowded with the British pendants. Nor was the progress of the land forces less rapid. Ter Vere, a fortress commanding the Veergat, a narrow entrance leading into the channel which separated South Beveland, was taken, with its garrison of a thousand men; Goes, the capital of the latter island, opened its gates; and SIR JOHN HOPE, an officer destined to future celebrity in the Peninsular wars, with seven thousand men, pushing rapidly on, appeared before the gates of Bahtz on the evening of the 2d. Such was the consternation produced by the sudden advance and formidable forces, both naval and military, of the invaders, that this important fort, situated at the point of separation of the East and West Scheldt, and the key to both channels, was evacuated in the night by the garrison, and next morning occupied by the British troops. The success of the expedition appeared certain: more than two-thirds of the distance to Antwerp had been got over in three days; both divisions of the Scheldt were full of British vessels; the British standards were only five leagues from that fortress, and in four days more thirty thousand men might be assembled around its walls.¹

It is agreed by all the French military writers, that such was the weakness of Antwerp at that moment, that if the English general had taken advantage of the first moment of consternation consequent on the rapid advance of his leading column, pushed across the narrow channel which separates South Beveland from the mainland, and marched up the right bank of the river, he would, in a

¹ Lord Chat-
ham's Desp.
Aug. 2, 1809.
Ann. Reg.
474, 479.
Appendix to
Chron. Vict.
et Cong. xix.
247, 254.

few hours, have arrived at the gates of the fortress, and by a *coup-de-main* carried it without the possibility of resistance.* By crossing over to the left bank of the Scheldt, and occupying the fort of Tête de Flandre, opposite Antwerp, which could hardly have made any resistance, success was certain; for the city has no defences whatever on the left bank of the river, and the fleet could neither have got up above the Tête de Flandre, nor escaped destruction even in the dockyards themselves, from a bombardment from the opposite side, not half a mile distant. The instructions of the commander-in-chief, Lord Chatham, were precise; and they bore that the main object of the expedition was the destruction of the ships building or afloat in the Scheldt, and of the arsenals and dockyards in Antwerp, Terneuse, and Flushing; and an ulterior or subordinate object only, the reduction of the island of Walcheren.¹†

CHAP.
IX.

1809.

13.
Certainty of
success if
Antwerp had
been first
attacked.

¹ Lord Chatham's Instructions, Parl. Deb. xv. App. No. 1. Jom. iii. 300.

* "Had the English advanced rapidly, either by South Beveland to Lille and Antwerp, or with their squadron vigorously pursued ours as it withdrew up the Scheldt, they would have taken by surprise all the forts and defences of the Scheldt. Every thing induces the belief that they would have succeeded in burning our arsenals and destroying our fleet. Antwerp, like other places on the frontier, was garrisoned only by the weak depots of regiments which were combating on the Danube. Not one of them was armed. Monnet had six battalions in Flushing. Rousseau, who commanded on the left bank of the Scheldt, had only three or four thousand recruits under his orders, whom he kept at Ghent on account of the insalubrity of the country. Battalions of grenadiers and chasseurs of the national guards, alone were intrusted with the defence of the coast."—PELET, iv. 319.

"The fortress of Antwerp, ill defended and paralysed in the first moment of terror, would have easily yielded to a brisk attack."—*Vict. et Conq.* xix. 254.

"The coast was stripped of troops to such a degree, that nothing could have hindered the English from disembarking thirty thousand men on the left bank of the Scheldt, and in three days arriving with their numerous artillery before Antwerp. Meanwhile, the remainder might have entered the Scheldt to fix our attention on Flushing and the Isle of Cadzand. Antwerp had hardly a garrison; our fleet would have been taken by surprise, and its retreat rendered impossible; inasmuch that, by merely occupying the fort of *Tête de Flandre*, opposite Antwerp on the left bank of the Scheldt, the success of the enterprise would have been certain."—JOMINI, *Vie de Napoleon*, iii. 299, 300.

Napoleon has left a highly important observation on this subject. "The fleet," says he, "when the expedition arrived on the coast of Holland, was *moored off Flushing*. The great object of Chatham should have been to cut off the fleet from Antwerp, which would necessarily have drawn after it the destruction of both, for Antwerp had only a garrison of three thousand men. This might have been done by pushing on a corps of six thousand men through South Beveland to Bahta *the day the expedition landed*; the fleet would thus have been cut off from Antwerp, and both it and that fortress must have surrendered. But from the moment that the fleet got up to Antwerp, which it did soon after the siege of Flushing began, the failure of the expedition was certain."—NAPOLEON in MONTMOLON, ii. 261; and i. 219.—"I am of opinion," said he to O'Meara, "that if you had landed a few thousand men at first at Williamstadt, and marched direct to Antwerp, you might, between consternation, want of preparation, and the uncertainty of the number of assailants, have taken it by a *coup-de-main*. But after the fleet got up, it was impossible."—O'MEARA, i. 255.

† "You are, upon the receipt of these our instructions, to repair with our

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

14.

Ruinous de-
lay on the
part of Lord
Chatham,
who besieges
Flushing first.

But England had not at that period two Wellingtons in her service. Lord Chatham, to whom the expedition was intrusted, neither inherited the energy of his father, the great Earl of Chatham, nor shared the capacity of his immortal brother, William Pitt. A respectable veteran, not without merit in the routine of official duty at home, he was totally destitute of the activity and decision requisite in an enterprise, in which success was to be won rather by rapidity of movement than deliberation of conduct. Destitute of experience, unknown to fame, of indolent habits, he owed his appointment to court favour, which ministers were chiefly culpable for not resisting to the uttermost of their power. Reversing, in consequence, alike the tenor of his instructions and the dictates of common sense on the subject, he directed his force, in the first instance, to the last object with which he was intrusted; and instead of pushing on in the outset by forced marches to seize Antwerp and the forts of the river, before the enemy could collect a force for their defence, lost the precious hours, big with the fate of the campaign, in reducing Flushing,¹ valueless as a

¹ Lord Chatham's Instructions, *Parl. Deb.* xv. App. No. 1. *Jom. Vie de Nap.* iii. 300.

said troops to the Scheldt, and carry into effect the following instructions, in conjunction with the commander of the naval forces. This conjoint expedition has for its object the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, either building or afloat at Antwerp or Flushing, or afloat in the Scheldt, the destruction of the arsenals and dockyards at Antwerp, Terneuse, and Flushing, the reduction of the island of Walcheren, and rendering the Scheldt, if possible, no longer navigable for ships of war."—*LORD CHATHAM'S INSTRUCTIONS, 16th July 1806; Parl. Deb. xv. App. No. 1.*

It appears also, from Lord Chatham's evidence before the parliamentary committee, that he was in possession of the more detailed government plan, which was to proceed across South Beveland immediately after landing, and land the troops at Sandvliet on the right bank of the Scheldt, opposite Bahtz, and thence push on direct to Antwerp. On the 5th of August, twenty thousand men, according to his statement, might have been collected there, a force amply sufficient for the complete success of the expedition. "I conceive," says Lord Chatham, "what was intended to be done was, by landing such part of the army as was not engaged in the siege of Flushing or employed in the reduction of Walcheren, as soon as possible at Sandvliet, and to proceed against Antwerp according to circumstances, which could not be distinctly known till the arrival of the expedition. The expedition, under the most favourable circumstances, might have arrived at Sandvliet in four days from leaving the Downs: on the 4th of August, the infantry and cavalry might have been disembarked at that place, and the heavy stores and ordnance in two or three days more."—*LORD CHATHAM'S EVIDENCE; Parl. Deb. xv. 350, 359, App.* Sandvliet is only ten miles from Antwerp; and the first considerable reinforcement of the enemy arrived at that town on the 11th and 12th. It is evident, therefore, that the success of the expedition was certain, if the government plan of pushing up the Scheldt with the bulk of the army, leaving a division only to observe Flushing, had been complied with. But the cabinet at home appear to have not sufficiently impressed upon Lord Chatham the necessity of adhering energetically to this plan, and are responsible for not having interrupted the siege of Flushing when once it was commenced.

post in advance after the fleet had entered the Scheldt, incapable of defence after Antwerp had fallen, if required as a support in case of retreat.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

Having adopted this unhappy resolution, Lord Chatham prosecuted the subordinate object of reducing Flushing with great vigour and success. The garrison were hotly driven into the works, with considerable loss, on the first approach of the besiegers; several sallies, afterwards undertaken, were repulsed; and the artillery having been quickly landed, the trenches were armed, approaches commenced and pushed on with great rapidity. On the 13th, the breaching batteries opened their fire on the land side from fifty-two heavy guns; while seven ships of the line, and a large flotilla of bomb-vessels, kept up a cannonade with uncommon vigour from the sea. It was then found, what subsequent experience has since abundantly verified, that there are no land batteries, however strong, which can withstand, along an equal space in front, the well-supported fire of several ships of the line. The sea-defences were speedily ruined, and every gun bearing on the water silenced; the town took fire in several places, and the inhabitants, beset with a flaming tempest both from the north and south, besought the governor, as the only means of avoiding total ruin, to surrender. Such was the consternation produced by the bombardment, that after it had continued three days, and the English troops had effected a lodgement within musket-shot of the rampart, the French general proposed a suspension of arms, and the town was surrendered on the 16th, with five thousand eight hundred prisoners and two hundred pieces of cannon. The total prisoners taken since the landing of the expedition exceeded seven thousand.¹

15.
Siege and
capture of
Flushing.

Aug. 13.

¹ Lord Chat-
ham's Desp.
Ann. Reg.
1809, 490,
493. App. to
Chron. Vol.
iv, 327.

Hitherto fortune seemed to have smiled on all the efforts of the expedition; but she soon showed that, like others of her sex, she reserved her favours only for the daring and the enterprising. The time lost in besieging Flushing proved fatal to all the other objects of the expedition. Indefatigable were the efforts of the French and Dutch governments, during that precious breathing-time, to direct troops to the menaced point; and in a fortnight it was beyond the reach of attack. On the 12th, the King of Holland arrived at the head of his guards, and

16.
The time lost
in reducing
Flushing
saves Ant-
werp.

Aug. 12

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

Aug. 26.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xvi. App.
321. Lord
Chatham's
Desp. Sept. 2,
1809. Ann.
Reg. 1809,
502. App. to
Chron. Jom.
iii. 302, 303.
Pel. iv. 328,
336.

17.
The retention
of Walche-
ren, at first
attempted, is
at last aban-
doned as
hopeless.

five thousand troops of the line; the generals commanding in Flanders and Picardy despatched an equal number, who arrived from the 14th to the 20th. Meanwhile, the fleet was removed above the town; the batteries were armed; the ditches cleared out and filled with water, and the national guards of all the surrounding departments were poured into the fortress. While these active preparations were going on, twenty thousand admirable troops were kept inactive in South Beveland, almost within sight of the steeples of Antwerp; and so dilatory were the proceedings of the English general, that though Flushing surrendered on the 16th, it was not till the 26th that he advanced the headquarters to Bahtz, a distance not exceeding thirty miles. By that time thirty thousand of the enemy were assembled on the Scheldt; Bernadotte, who had been despatched by the government at Paris to take the command, had put Antwerp in a respectable state of defence; the squadron was in safety; ulterior success impossible; while three thousand of the British troops were already in the hospital, and the pestilential marshes in that unhealthy district were fast exercising their malignant influence on the health of the soldiers. In these circumstances it was rightly judged by Lord Chatham and a council of war, whose opinion was unanimous on the subject, that further advance was impossible, and orders were given in the beginning of September to withdraw the whole troops into the island of Walcheren.¹

It was at first thought that it would have been practicable to have retained possession of this important conquest, and doubtless, if it had been so, the acquisition would have been of the last consequence, as hermetically closing the Scheldt, and rendering useless all the vast naval preparations of the enemy in that quarter. At that particular moment, it was of the more consequence to retain possession of that island, as the negotiations with Austria were not only not yet brought to a conclusion, but it was sometimes more than doubtful, during their continuance, whether war would not again break out. In that event, it would, of course, have been of the greatest importance to keep thirty thousand of the enemy grouped under the walls of Antwerp. Fifteen

thousand men accordingly were left as a garrison in the island, and the remainder of the troops returned to England. But the malaria distemper of the country, since too well known under the name of the Walcheren fever, proved so fatal in its ravages, that it was deemed impolitic to retain it permanently, especially after the conclusion of peace between Austria and France had removed the principal motive for keeping the troops in that unhealthy station. Towards the middle of September, the average number of deaths was from two to three hundred a-week, and nearly half the garrison was in hospital. Orders were therefore given to abandon the island; in the middle of November the works and naval basins of Flushing were destroyed, and before Christmas the whole was evacuated by the British troops; but it appeared from a parliamentary return, that seven thousand men had been lost in the enterprise, and that nearly half the troops engaged in it brought home with them the seeds of a distemper which few were able entirely to shake off during the remainder of their lives.¹*

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

Nov. 23.

¹ Ann. Reg.
1809, 225.
Jom. iii. 303,
304.

It is observed by Mr Hallam, that the state trials of England exhibit the most appalling accumulation of judicial iniquity which is to be found in any age or country in the world, and far exceeding in atrocity any thing recorded of legal injustice in the annals even of Eastern despotism. The reason, he justly adds, is, that the monarch could not wreak his vengeance, or the contending nobles or parties destroy each other, as in other states, by open outrage or undisguised violence; and that the courts of law were the theatre, and state prosecutions the engines, by which this oppression was perpetrated, and these contests of faction conducted. If the purification of the legal tribunals, which took place at the Revolution, has freed, as it undoubtedly has, the judicial ermine of England from this hideous imputation, it has only, in many cases, transferred it to another quarter, and parliament is the arena in which, from henceforth, as the contests of parties were conducted, the historian is to find the traces of the indelible corruption and weakness of humanity. On no other principle,

18.
Blind injustice which frequently characterises the proceedings of the British parliament.

* The sick, returned at various times to England from Walcheren, amounted to 12,863.—*Parl. Papers*, No. 24; *Parl. Deb.* xv. 23, *App.*

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

indeed, can the frequent gross injustice, and occasional almost political insanity of the English legislature and people, during the last hundred and fifty years, be explained; and those who hope, by rendering our institutions more democratical, to remedy these evils, would do well to become still more radical in their cure, and apply their reform to the human heart. It is a common remark in parliament, that, in party questions, the real motive of the speaker is never divulged in debate; and that the considerations and objects which both sides have most at heart, are those which are with the greatest care withdrawn from the view. All parties have, in this way, come to reduce to perfection, in a practical form, the celebrated saying of Talleyrand, that the "great object of speech is to conceal the thoughts." The truth of these principles was signally illustrated, in the two great objects of party contention during the session of 1809—the accusations against the Duke of York, and the Walcheren expedition.

19.
Pernicious
consumption
of time in
debates in
parliament at
this time.

That the spring of 1809 was the grand crisis of the war; that Austria and Spain were then, for the first time, brought to act together in real earnest, and hurl their strength, animated by the highest degree of patriotic enthusiasm, against the enemy; that the military power of Britain had then risen to an unparalleled degree of efficiency, and was prepared, under renowned leaders, to follow up the career of victory recently opened to her arms, was universally known and acknowledged. Every man in the empire felt that the moment had arrived when Europe was to be disenthralled by one convulsive effort, or their fetters riveted for a period to which no termination could be foreseen, on the enchained nations. What, then, at such a moment, was the grand object of consideration in the House of Commons? Was it to cement the alliance, to pour forth the treasures of England with a profusion worthy of the occasion; and increase, by every means in their power, the efficiency of the army upon which such mighty destinies depended? Quite the reverse. The popular party in the House of Commons appeared to value the crisis only in proportion to the means which it afforded them of directing, with additional effect, their attacks upon the government, and augmenting the diffi-

culties experienced in the discharge of its vital duties by the executive. And at the moment when Austria was straining every nerve for the conflict, and Napoleon was preparing the forces which dealt out the thunderbolts of Echmuhl and Wagram, the British House of Commons was, for months together, occupied with no other subject but the secret springs of a few promotions in the army, and the details of the commander-in-chief's intrigue with his artful mistress, Mrs Clarke !

CHAP.
LX.
1800.

The attack on the Duke of York's administration of the army was founded upon the allegation of his having disposed of that part of the patronage with which he was intrusted as commander-in-chief for corrupt or unworthy considerations. The debates and examinations on the subject began in the end of January, and continued almost without the intermission of a day till the 17th March ; absorbing thus nearly the whole time both of government and of the country, at the very moment when a concentration of all the national thought and energies was required for the prosecution of the gigantic campaign in progress on the Continent. But this was not all : the time thus spent was not only wasted, but it led to the most pernicious results. Nothing whatever came out against the commander-in-chief, but that he had occasionally admitted a designing and artful mistress to a certain share in the disposal of commissions ; and that she made use of, and exaggerated this influence to obtain bribes, unknown to him, from the applicants for promotion. If the moralist must ever see much to condemn in the indulgence of habits which never fail in any rank to degrade the character of such as become slaves to them, the statesman must admit that a more deplorable waste of time and national interest never occurred, than when such details were for months together, at such a crisis, made the subject of legislative investigation. Mr Wardle, the mover of the inquiry, rose for a short time into great popularity, and then sank at once to rise no more. After a fatiguing investigation and debate, which occupies above fifteen hundred pages of the parliamentary debates, the charges were negatived by a majority of 241—the numbers being 364 to 123.¹

20.
Charges
against the
Duke of
York.

Jan. 27.
March 17.

March 17.
¹ Parl. Deb.
xii. 263, 1067,
and xiii. 1710.

No man of sense, who reads the proceedings, can now

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

21.

His resignation
in conse-
quence of the
universal
clamour.
March 18.
March 22.

doubt that this decision was fully borne out by the evidence, and that the Duke of York at that period was the victim of factious injustice: but, meanwhile, the public mind became violently excited; the fury of popular obloquy was irresistible; and, government deeming it necessary to yield to the torrent, the Duke sent in his resignation. This took place just four days before the commander-in-chief was officially called upon to report upon the vital point of the force which could be spared for the projected expedition to the Scheldt. Thus, at the very time when the most important military operations ever engaged in by England were under consideration, the ambition of selfish faction, and the fury of misguided zeal, combined to introduce new and wholly inexperienced persons to the direction of the army, and chase from its command the public-spirited prince whose judicious reforms and practical improvements had brought it from an unworthy state of depression to its actual condition of efficiency and glory. The deplorable postponement of the Walcheren expedition till it was too late to serve as a relief to the heroism of Austria; its calamitous issue when it was undertaken; and the abortive result of the first triumphs in Spain, are thus immediately connected with this act of national absurdity and injustice.¹*

¹ Parl. Deb.
xii. 263, 1057;
xiii. 1710.

22

Debates on
the Wal-
cheren expe-
dition.

Much in the same spirit were the debates which took place on the Walcheren expedition. No fault, indeed, could here be found with the theme of discussion. The failure of so vast an armament, fitted out at such a cost, adequate to such achievements, formed a subject worthy of the anxious investigation of the parliament of England; and if it had elicited either generous feelings or elevated views from those who conducted the accusation, no more useful subject of contemplation to the historian could have been presented. But this was very far indeed from being the case. Though the investigation was conducted with great industry and ability, the views taken on the side of the Opposition were so overstrained and

* Mrs Clarke, the leading character in this maze of scandal and intrigue, was a woman possessed of considerable personal attractions, and no small share of ready wit and repartee. When asked in a subsequent trial by a cross-examining counsel, "Pray, madam, under whose *protection* are you just now?" She immediately answered, bowing to the court, "Under that of my Lord Chief-Justice." The court was convulsed with laughter, in which his Lordship heartily joined, and the barrister was silent.

exaggerated, as to lead to no useful or practical result. Their great object was to show that the whole blame of the failure of the expedition rested with ministers, and ministers alone; that success was at no period, and by no efforts, attainable; that the point of attack was ill chosen, the force ill directed, and the whole cost and blood of the armament misapplied. Nothing can be more evident than that these charges were in a great part wholly groundless, as the expedition was clearly directed against the most important part of the enemy's resources; the effects of success would have been immense and vital to the national independence of England; the forces employed were fully adequate to the object in view; and the general instructions given, such as would, if energetically acted upon, have unquestionably led to decisive success.*

The real points in which government were blamable, and for which it is impossible to find any adequate excuse, were the long delay which occurred in determining upon the expedition, and the not straining every nerve to send it out in April or May, instead of the end of July; and the sanctioning the appointment of an officer as commander-in-chief, unknown to fame, and obviously inadequate to

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

23.

The real points in which the conduct of the expedition was blamable were not touched on.

* The general policy of the expedition, according to the original instructions of government, was clearly established by the following documents. 1st, In Lord Castlereagh's secret instructions to Lord Chatham, previous to sailing, it was stated:—"The complete success of the operation would include the capture or destruction of the whole of the enemy's ships, whether building at Antwerp or afloat in the Scheldt; the entire destruction of their yards and arsenals at Antwerp, Terneuse, and Flushing; and the rendering the Scheldt, if possible, no longer navigable for ships of war. As the accomplishment of these objects, in their fullest extent, must, in a great measure, depend upon the rapidity with which the enterprise is carried into execution, it has been deemed advisable to appropriate such an amount of force to this service, as may enable you, at the same time that you occupy Walcheren and South Beveland, to advance at once a considerable force against Antwerp, which may be reinforced as soon as Flushing is invested, if not actually reduced. The expedition, therefore, must be considered as not, in the first instance, assuming any other character than a *coup-de-main*, combining with it a powerful diversion against the enemy."—*Secret Instructions, June 1809; Parl. Deb. xv. 426, App. 2d*, It was proved by Col. Fyers, the chief engineer of the army, and General M'Leod, the commander of artillery to the expedition, that "supposing the army to have landed successfully at Sandvliet on the 1st, 2d, and 3d of August, thirty mortars might have been ready in battery to begin the bombardment of the city of Antwerp and fleet on the evening of the 9th or morning of the 10th, and that both might have been destroyed if they did not surrender."—*Ibid. 553, 566, App. 3d*, The battering train was immense, amounting to seventy battering guns and seventy-four mortars.—*Ibid. sec. 7, App. Evid. c. 138. 4th*, On the 9th August, there were only a few thousand troops and national guards in Antwerp, all in a great state of alarm; the first reinforcements of any amount which arrived, were the King of Holland's guards and troops of the line, in number five thousand, who did not arrive till the 12th, and could not have entered the town if the English had been before it.—*JOMINI, Vie de NAPOLEON, iii. 302*. These facts and documents are a complete exculpation of ministers in every particular, except the choice of Lord Chatham, and the delay in sending out the expedition.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xv. App. 1,
and xvi. 194,
422.

24.
Quarrel be-
tween Lord
Castlereagh
and Mr
Canning.

April 4.

² Mr. Can-
ning's State-
ment, Nov.
14, 1809.
Ann. Reg.
1809, 239.
Canning's
Life, i. 56.

the direction of such an enterprise. Yet these points were hardly ever touched on in the course of the debate, so great was the anxiety to throw the whole blame upon ministers, rather than upon a commander known to have owed his appointment to royal favour. After a lengthened investigation and debate, ministers were declared not blamable upon the general policy of the expedition, by a majority, however, of only forty-eight—the numbers being 275 to 227: a majority which, on the subordinate question of whether the protracted detention of Walcheren was blamable, fell to twenty-three; a division which clearly demonstrated, how strongly the calamitous issue of the expedition had come to influence the public mind.¹

The untoward issue of this expedition, the obloquy which it brought upon government, and the narrow escape which they made from total shipwreck on its result, roused into a flame the ill-smothered embers of a conflagration in the cabinet, and led, at this critical moment, to a change in the most important offices of the state. Mr Canning, who, since the formation of Mr Perceval's administration, had held the seals of the foreign office, had long conceived that Lord Castlereagh, who was secretary at war, was unfit to be intrusted with the important and hourly increasing duties of that department. This opinion, which subsequent events have triumphantly disproved, and which was doubtless chiefly based at that time, in the able but aspiring mind of the foreign secretary, on the illusions of ambition and the whisperings of jealousy, was strongly confirmed by the disastrous issue of the Scheldt expedition; which he ascribed, with how much justice the preceding observations will show, to the ignorance and incapacity of the secretary at war, to whom the direction of its details had been in a great measure intrusted. Early in April he had intimated to the Duke of Portland, the nominal head of the administration, that he conceived the public service required that either he or Lord Castlereagh should resign; and offered to remove all difficulties by his own retirement. Anxious to prevent any schism in the cabinet at such a crisis, the Duke consulted Lord Camden, and prevailed on Mr Canning meanwhile to suspend his resignation:² the King was after-

wards spoken to on the subject, but he also postponed any definite opinion.

A long negotiation subsequently ensued, which, against Mr Canning's strongest remonstrances, was protracted till the issue of the Scheldt expedition became known; and although some of Lord Castlereagh's friends were made aware of what was going on, yet they did not deem it advisable to make him privy to it. At length, in the first week of September, his lordship was informed of the whole by his friends, further concealment having become impossible by Mr Canning's resignation. Lord Castlereagh, under the impression that he had been ill-used by Mr Canning in this transaction, by not having been made acquainted from the first with the steps calculated to prejudice him which he had adopted, immediately sent Mr Canning a challenge. The parties met; and at the second fire Mr Canning fell, having received a severe wound in the thigh. Both gentlemen had previously sent in their resignations; and though a reconciliation was subsequently effected, and their joint services were regained for their country, their quarrel had the effect, at the time, of excluding both from administration. After an unsuccessful attempt to effect a coalition with Lords Grey and Grenville, Lord Wellesley was recalled from the embassy of Spain to fill the situation of foreign secretary; Lord Castlereagh was, two years afterwards, reinstated in office, and contributed in an essential manner to the triumphs and glories of the grand alliance; but Mr Canning, who aimed at the highest destinies, for long declined all offers of employment at home, and did not appear again in official situation till after the peace.¹

A general change now took place in the administration. The Duke of Portland, whose health had for some time been declining, resigned his place as head of the government, and as the negotiation with Lords Grey and Grenville had failed in procuring their accession to the cabinet, the ministry was reconstructed entirely from the Tory party. Mr Perceval filled the place of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer; the Earl of Liverpool was transferred from the home to the war office; Mr Ryder became home, and Marquis Wellesley foreign secretary. There can be no doubt that all these

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

25.

Which leads to a duel between them, and the resignation of both.

Sept. 8.

Sept. 22.

¹ Ann. Reg. 1809, 239. Mr Canning's Statement, Nov. 14, 1809. App. to Chron. 517, 530. Canning's Life, l. 56, 83. Life and Speeches.

26.

Changes in the administration.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

offices were filled by men of business and talent; and the cabinet, as so constructed, possessed the inestimable advantage of unity of opinion on all vital questions, and especially on the great one of the prosecution of the war: an advantage so great, that for its want, no acquirements however great, no talents however splendid, can in the long run compensate. But still the abilities of none of these statesmen, with the exception of Marquis Wellesley, were either of the highest order or the most brilliant character; and it is a remarkable circumstance, indicating the power of unity of purpose and resolution of mind, in a nation and its government, to compensate for the want of the showy qualities of the orator or the practised skill of the parliamentary debater, that the most glorious triumphs recorded in the history of England were achieved, not only when the persons possessing in the highest degree these qualities were not in the administration, but when they were actively engaged on the side of the Opposition.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1809, 239.
Canning's
Life, 84.
Works, vol. I.

27.
Youth and
first introduc-
tion to public
life of Mr
Canning.

GEORGE CANNING, whom this unhappy intrigue excluded from office for several years, was the most finished orator who had appeared in parliament since the days of Pitt and Fox. Born of respectable, though not opulent parents, descended from an honourable line of ancestors, he was yet destitute of the advantages of rank and fortune, and owed his elevation entirely to the early display of brilliant talents at Oxford—that noble establishment, which reflects, as it were in a mirror, the empire, shaded only with a more aristocratic hue than the original, and where genius so often meets with the friendship, or acquires the distinction, which determines its direction in future life. Originally destined for the bar, he was reluctantly pursuing the thorny study of the law, when the fame of his oratorical talents attracted the notice of Mr Pitt, then fully alive to the importance of drawing to his standard all that he could collect of debating power, and counteracting by the influence of government the natural disposition of youth to range itself under the colours of Opposition. Mr Canning had originally been imbued with Whig principles, and his nearest relations were of that party; but the horrors of the French Revolution had produced that change in

his mind which they induced at that period in so many of the best of mankind. The leaders of Opposition had nothing to offer him; and, upon a conference with Mr Pitt in 1793, he found himself fully prepared to concur in all his views on the leading objects of policy. Thus he entered parliament for Newport in 1793, an avowed supporter of the Tory administration; his first speech, delivered on 31st January 1794, already bespoke the practised orator, formed on the models of ancient eloquence; and, to the end of his life, he continued the steady opponent of *French* revolutionary principles. But it would have been well for his fame, as well as for the fortunes of his country, if he had been equally proof against the seductions as against the terrors of democratic ambition; if he had seen the syren in the same colours when placed by his side as when arrayed with his enemies; and remained steady, in exalted stations in maturer years, to those principles for which he had bravely combated in early youth under the ancient banners of England.¹

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

Endowed by nature with the soul of genius, the fire of poetry, and the glow of eloquence; an accomplished classical scholar, and deeply versed in native literature, Mr Canning acquired, before the end of his career, a greater command over the House of Commons than any statesman ever gained from the mere force of oratorical power. Without the debating energy of Fox, the prophetic elevation of Pitt, or the philosophic wisdom of Burke, he possessed, in a higher degree than any of the three, the power of captivating his hearers by the charm of diction and the graces of an accomplished oratory. Nor was it only in the ornate branches of composition that he excelled. In severer studies he was also a perfect master, and none treated the abstruse and difficult subjects of the monetary changes, and the corn laws, with more lucid effect. His state-papers are a model, not only of terse and finished composition, but of cogent and accurate reasoning; his conversational powers were of the highest order; and much of his public influence was, in his later days, owing to those private friends whom the charm of his society had rendered insensible to the ultimate dangers of his career. He was early impressed

¹ Canning's
Life, i. 1, 23.

28.
His character
as an orator
and states-
man.

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

with the strongest sense of the consequences of Jacobin ascendancy, even when veiled under the splendid mantle of the Empire; and Great Britain owes to his strenuous and persevering support much of the glory of the Peninsular war, and not a little of the final triumphs of the grand alliance. But the strength of his intellect was not equal to the brilliancy of his imagination; the sagacity of his foresight was less powerful than the glow of his ambition. Bent from the very outset upon being the first, conscious of talents second in the end to none, he was at times little scrupulous about the means of his elevation, and sometimes did not disdain to owe to private fascination or political intrigue what in a free monarchy should be the reward of public greatness.

20.
His faults and
inconsistencies.

Prompted by this infirmity, passionately fond of popularity, he received with favour, after the war was over, the advances of the democratic leaders; gradually veered round more and more, with the increasing delusion of the age, to liberal principles; and at length, when the constitution was beset on all sides with dangers, rent asunder the monarchical party by his ambition, and elevated himself to the lead by a dubious alliance with his former opponents, its present enemies. This change is more to be ascribed to the age in which he lived than to himself as an individual; but it is the characteristic mark of the highest class of intellect and principle to be above the age. Such superiority may be often fatal to present power, but it is the only sure basis for future and enduring fame; it was not by yielding to the tide that Cato gained immortal renown at Utica. The effects of this change were felt throughout the world. His name was hailed with transport by the discontented and turbulent in every clime; his judgment yielded to the fascinating influence: he flattered himself he was promoting the national interests, when in fact he was listening to the syren voice of individual ambition: he encouraged the insurrection of the South American colonies, but, in so doing, he established a precedent capable of fatal application in future times to his own country; he boasted that he had "called a new world into existence," but the deluge which he raised in his elevation has wellnigh submerged all the landmarks of the old. He first exhibited the perilous

example of the union of ministerial power with popular fascination ; and, after spending the best years of his life in successfully combating democratic principles, terminated his career by turning the prow of the state, perhaps unconsciously, right into the gulf of revolution.*

In almost every feature of his character and career, LORD CASTLEREAGH was the reverse of this accomplished statesman ; and the mortal hostility which for a time prevailed between them, was typical of the struggle between those antagonist principles in the British constitution, so soon destined to come into collision, and whose conflict ere long shook the empire to its foundation. Born of a noble and powerful family, he did not, like his brilliant rival, owe his elevation to his own unaided exertions, but was wafted into office and public life with all the advantages of birth and connexions. He was early intrusted with high situations in the Irish government ; and in the important and arduous matter of the Union with England, gave immediate proof of that prompt determination, and undaunted courage, which ultimately shone forth with such lustre

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

30.
Character of
Lord Castle-
reagh.

* Mr Canning's great oratorical powers will never be adequately appreciated except by those who study his speeches, on various occasions, *out of parliament*, especially those to his Liverpool constituents, collected in the edition of his *Memoirs and Speeches*, vi. 319, *et seq.* In them there is much more of the real soul of eloquence, more energy and brevity, more undisguised announcement of principle, and fearless assertion of truth, than in any of his parliamentary orations. It is the same with Sir Robert Peel: none of his speeches in the House of Commons will, as read by posterity, or even by the public without the pale of parliamentary influence, be deemed so fine as some delivered to popular assemblies, particularly that at Merchant Taylors' Hall, in June 1835, and at the Glasgow banquet in January 1837. The reason is obvious, and is the same in both cases. What the world in general, and posterity without exception, look for in oratory, is not so much skilful combating with an adversary, dexterity in eluding difficulties, pointed reference to prior inconsistencies, or home-thrusts at present tergiversations, as vigour of thought, energy of expression, heartfelt vehemence, fearless enunciation of eternal truth. Both these great masters in oratory possess these elevated qualities in a high degree ; but the habits of senatorial debate, and the impression produced in parliament at the moment, by such personal or temporary appeals, is such, that it necessarily withdraws them in some degree, at least on ordinary occasions, from the loftiest flights of eloquence. The most "*effective*" present debater is by no means, in all cases, the man who will stand highest in the estimation of future ages, if his reputation is rested on his parliamentary efforts alone. The origin and frequent use of that expression in these times, and the high value attached to it in existing contests, is itself an indication of the assumption of a standard for parliamentary force in speaking, different from that commonly recognised, and not understood by the generality of men. But all such fictitious or conventional standards of excellence will be swept away by the floods of time ; and our great statesmen and orators on all sides would do well, while they cultivate this talent, as cultivate it they must for present impression, to anchor their reputation for future ages on the assertion of principles, and the use of expressions of permanent application and universal sway over the human heart.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

on the great theatre of Europe. An indefatigable man of business, thoroughly acquainted with all the details of office in the situations which he successively held, he was gifted with none of the qualities which are calculated to win the favour of a popular assembly, or captivate the imagination of the great body of mankind. His speeches, always distinguished by strong sense, unflinching energy, and lofty feeling, were generally full of matter, and often abounded with vigorous and conclusive arguments. But they wanted the charm of poetic fancy, they were destitute of the force of condensed expression, and seldom rose to the height of impassioned oratory. Hence his influence in the House as a debater was inconsiderable ; and though he long held important situations, and commanded, from his qualities as a statesman, the respect even of his enemies, he owed less than any minister of the day to the power of eloquence.

31.
Elevated
features of
his character.

But if the great and ennobling characteristics of a statesman are considered, none in English history will occupy a loftier pedestal, or be deemed worthy of more unqualified admiration. Fixed in his principles, disinterested in his patriotism, unbending in his resolution, he possessed in the highest degree that great quality, without which, in the hour of trial, all others are but as tinkling brass—moral courage and unflinching determination ; and they know little of human affairs who are not aware that this is at once the rarest, the most valuable, and the most commanding gift of nature. His courage was not simply that of a soldier who mounts the breach, though none possessed personal bravery in a higher degree ; it was that of the general who greatly dares, of the statesman who nobly endures ; and this invaluable quality seemed to rise with the circumstances which called for its erection. Conspicuous in the conduct of the Irish government at the time of the Union, it was doubly so during the perils and anxieties of the Peninsular campaigns, and shone forth with the brightest lustre in the crisis of Europe during the invasion of France. By his firmness of character, and yet suavity of manner, he mainly contributed to hold together the sometimes discordant elements of the grand alliance ; by

his energy he brought forth the mighty resources of England, at the decisive moment, with irresistible force; and when the resolution of the bravest hearts in Europe was failing under the responsibility of the last throw in the conflict, he nobly stood forth, and by his single efforts mainly brought about the bold determination which hurled Napoleon from his throne. The supporter of rational freedom, he was the resolute opponent of unbridled democracy; the real friend of the people, he was the unceasing enemy of their excesses; and while he disdained to purchase popularity by flattering their passions, he risked in their cause the objects to which his life had been devoted, and alone of all the statesmen of Europe procured for Poland, amidst the maledictions of the liberals and the delirium of Alexander's victories, a national existence, institutions, and laws; blessings too soon, alas! torn from them amidst the democratic transports and selfish ambition of later times.

CHAP.
LX.
1800.

Cut short in his career before these glorious days arrived, MR PERCEVAL has yet engraven his name deep on the brightest tablets in the annals of England. Born of a noble family, and not merely educated for, but eminent in the practice of the bar, he brought to public affairs the acuteness and precision of legal argument; and first rose to eminence in parliament by his spirit and perseverance in Opposition, during the brief period of Mr Fox's administration, when his party seldom mustered more than twenty or thirty members. But mere intellectual acumen rarely has weight with a mixed assembly; and in the House of Commons, unless their legal talents are merged in the force of public principle or moral feeling, lawyers have seldom risen to any lasting eminence. It was the great objects of philanthropy for which he contended, which gave Sir Samuel Romilly his well-deserved weight in that assembly and the country; and it was to a principle of a still dearer interest to humanity that Mr Perceval owed his elevation. He stood forth as the champion of the PROTESTANT FAITH; and at a crisis when the national heart was violently agitated by the dangers to which, it was thought, the Protestant establishments of the empire were exposed by

32.
Career of
Mr Perceval.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

the concessions then sought to be forced upon the King, he won the public confidence by the intrepidity and energy with which he appealed to the principles which had placed the House of Brunswick on the throne. Called by the favour of his sovereign to occupy a high place in the cabinet on the change of ministry in 1807, he conducted the lead in the House of Commons with a skill and ability which surpassed the expectations even of his friends; and when the Duke of Portland resigned, and Mr Canning and Lord Castlereagh withdrew, public opinion ratified the royal choice, which placed him at the head of administration.

33.
His character.

Without any of the great or commanding qualities of the orator, or the profound views which distinguish the highest class of statesmen, Mr Perceval maintained himself successfully in this exalted station, by the integrity of his character, the sincerity of his principles, the acuteness of his reasoning, and the spirit with which he combated the multifarious attacks of his enemies. Reversing the situation of the Roman emperor,* he would by common consent have been deemed unworthy of the lead, if he had not obtained it. Contrary to what is generally the case, he steadily advanced in reputation to the close of life; and possibly his premature end alone prevented him from rising, during the eventful years which immediately followed, to the very highest place among British statesmen. His measures were decided, his spirit resolute, his heart upright. Of unimpeachable integrity in private life, a sincere Christian, a tried patriot, the nation saw without suspicion hundreds of millions pass through his hands, and he justified their confidence by dying poor. He was adverse to all the liberal doctrines of the age, and anchored his faith, perhaps with too unbending rigidity, on the existing constitution in church and state; but time has since proved that the views are not always narrow which are founded on experience, and that the most liberal doctrines are sometimes the most ephemeral. His favourite maxims were, that concession of political power to the Catholics would infallibly lead, from one step to another, to the overthrow of our Protestant institutions, and that no remedy could be found

* "Omnium consensu, dignus imperio, nisi regnasset."—TACITUS.

for the disorders and sufferings of Ireland, but in the establishment of a well-regulated system of poor-laws. Great was the ridicule thrown upon such professions by many of the most learned and all the most liberal men of his time. Subsequent events, however, have in a great degree justified his penetration, and added another to the numerous instances which history affords of the eternal truth, that the only safe foundation for anticipation of the future is experience of the past, and that those who, from adhering to this principle, are thought to be behind one age, are generally in advance of the next.

While the vast resources of England, poured forth with a profusion worthy of the occasion, were thus lost to the cause of European freedom by the tardiness with which they were brought into action, and the want of vigour with which they were directed in the field, Austria was anxiously protracting a painful negotiation, and watching every gleam in the political horizon, before she finally put the seal to her degradation. The Emperor retired to Vienna, where he was soon immersed in the cares of his immense empire; while the immediate conduct of the negotiation was committed, at Altenburg in Hungary, to Metternich on the part of Austria, and Talleyrand on that of France. The situation of Napoleon was delicate, particularly in relation to Russia, with which he had repeatedly, during the campaign, short as it was, been on terms bordering on hostility: but the battle of Wagram had, as if by magic, brought back the cabinet of St Petersburg to its temporising policy, and restored the relations of amity between the two cabinets. When the Emperor Francis, after the conclusion of the armistice, addressed a letter to Alexander, and another to Napoleon, these two sovereigns instantly mutually communicated their despatches and answers to each other. On this side, therefore, no obstacles were to be anticipated; and although there were at first some difficulties, and no small alarm awakened by the proposal, on the part of the French minister, to unite a portion of Galicia to the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, which gave instant umbrage to the cabinet and nobles of St Petersburg, yet in the end this difficulty, great as it was, yielded to the thirst for territorial aggrandisement. It was agreed to give Russia a share of the

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

34.
Position of
France in
relation to
Russia at this
period.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

¹ Bign. viii.

345, 357.

Hard. x. 469,

472.

spoil of Galicia; the name of Poland was never again to be revived; and the Emperor Alexander suffered himself to be persuaded, or affected to believe, that even with a considerable addition of territory, the Grand-duchy of Lithuania could never become an object of jealousy to the Czars of Muscovy.¹*

35.
Negotiation
between
France and
Austria.
July 22.

Aug. 17.

Aug. 19.

The cabinet of Vienna, which was stationed at Komorn in Hungary, prolonged the negotiation, from a latent hope that successes in Spain, on the Scheldt, or in the Tyrol, might enable it to resume hostilities with some prospect of success, or obtain some abatement from the rigorous terms which were demanded by the conqueror. These were, the immediate suppression of the landwehr, the reduction of the regular army to one half, the expulsion of all French royalists from the Austrian monarchy, and the cession of all the provinces actually occupied by the French armies. To these extravagant demands, which amounted to a total destruction of the monarchy, Count Metternich opposed the equally extravagant proposition, that every thing should be restored to the *statu quo ante bellum*. As the negotiation advanced, Napoleon employed menaces of the severest kind against the Imperial government in the event of his being again driven to hostilities, boasted much of his perfect intelligence with the Emperor Alexander, and even dropped some significant hints of his intention, if driven to extremities, to separate the three crowns which now centred on the Imperial brows, and bestow two of them on the Archdukes Charles and John. Meanwhile, the utmost care was taken to improve the military position of the army, and make every thing

* "My interests," said Alexander to Napoleon, "are entirely in the hands of your Majesty. You may give me a certain pledge of your friendship in repeating what you said at Tilsit and Erfurth, on the interests of Russia in connexion with the *late kingdom of Poland*, and which I have since charged my ambassador to confirm."—"Poland," said Napoleon to M. Gorgoli, the officer who bore the despatches to St Petersburg, "may give rise to some embarrassment betwixt us; but the world is large enough to afford us room to arrange ourselves."—"If the re-establishment of Poland is to be brought on the tapis," replied Alexander, "*the world is not large enough*; for I desire nothing further in it." The excitement was prodigious at St Petersburg; and it was openly said in some circles that it would be better to die sword in hand, or assassinate the Emperor, if he was disposed to yield, than to permit the reunion of Poland to the Grand-duchy. Napoleon was not ignorant of these alarming symptoms; and it was at length agreed that France should guarantee to Russia its new possessions, that the name of Poland and the Poles should be avoided, and three-fourths of the spoils of Galicia given to Lithuania, and one-fourth to Russia. Under a new name, and the sway of the King of Saxony, this was thought not likely to awaken any dangerous ideas as to the re-establishment of Poland.—See BIGNON, viii. 351 354.

ready for a resumption of hostilities. Magnificent reviews daily took place at Vienna; troops were incessantly forwarded from the rear to the corps in front; a grand distribution of honours and gratuities to the soldiers was made on the anniversary of the Emperor's birth-day on the 15th of August, accompanied by a decree for the erection of a column of Cherbourg granite, on the Pont Neuf at Paris, a hundred and eighty feet high, with the inscription, "Napoleon to the French people;" a vast fortress was commenced at Spitz, opposite to Vienna, and another at Raab, to serve as impregnable *têtes-du-pont* for the passage of the Danube; while, by a decree equally agreeable to the French as grievous to the German people, it was declared that, till the 11th April following, the whole expenses of the Grand Army should be laid upon the conquered territories.¹

But, in the midst of all his magnificent preparations and dazzling announcements, the Emperor had several causes for disquietude, and was far from feeling that confidence in his position which he declared to the world, and held forth in his conferences with Metternich. The Walcheren expedition kept all the Flemish provinces for some weeks in a state of suspense; and there was good reason to believe that, if Antwerp had fallen, the fermentation in the north of Germany would have drawn Prussia into an open declaration of war, which would at once have revived a desperate and doubtful contest on the Danube. The Tyrol was still in arms, and had a third time totally defeated the French invaders, and made the greater part of their number prisoners. Nor were the accounts from Spain of a more encouraging description. The disaster of Soult at Oporto, to be immediately noticed, had been followed by the invasion of Estremadura and the defeat of Talavera; while, at the same time, accounts were daily received of the discord among the generals employed in the Peninsula; and the details of an extensive conspiracy in Soult's army, revealed the alarming truth that the Republican generals, like the Roman consuls, dazzled by the thrones which had been won by so many of their number, were not altogether beyond the reach of intrigues which might elevate them from a marshal's baton to a king's sceptre.² "It is necessary,"

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

Aug. 11.
¹ Pel. iv. 344,
357. Sav. iv.
140, 148.
Bign. viii.
355, 361.

36.
Napoleon's
reasons for
secret dis-
quietude.

² Pel. iv.
345, 346.
Hard. x. 470
471.

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

said Napoleon, "to hasten at any price to make peace, in order that the enemy may not gain time to profit by his machinations."

37.
Attempt to
assassinate
him by Stab.

The Emperor's desire to bring the long-protracted negotiations to a conclusion, was increased by a singular attempt at assassination which was at this period made upon his person. At the daily parades at Schœnbrunn, the attention of the guards and officers of his household had been more than once attracted by a young man, who threw himself in the way, and importunately demanded to be allowed to speak to the Emperor.

Sept. 15.

On the third occasion, one of the gendarmes seized him rudely by the neck to move him back, and, in doing so, perceived that he had something concealed in his bosom. He was searched; and it proved to be a large knife, sheathed in a number of sheets of paper. Being immediately apprehended and brought before Savary, the chief of the gendarmerie, for examination, he at once avowed that his intention was to have taken the Emperor's life; alleging as a reason, that he had been assured that the sovereigns would never make peace with him, and that, as he was the stronger, the grand object of universal pacification could never be attained till he were removed. It turned out that he was the son of a Protestant minister at Erfurth, and only eighteen years old. He had seen the Emperor when he was at that town the year before; and he admitted that he had borrowed his father's horse, without his knowledge, and come to Vienna to execute his purpose. "I had chiefly studied history,"

¹ Sav. iv.
141. Pel. iv.
371.

said he, "and often envied Joan of Arc, because she had delivered France from the yoke of its enemies; and I wished to follow her example."¹

38.
Who is con-
demned and
executed.

"The guards who surrounded me," said the Emperor, "would have cut you in pieces before you could have struck me!"—"I was well aware of that," replied he, "but I was not afraid to die."—"If I set you at liberty," said Napoleon, "would you return to your parents, and abandon your purpose?"—"Yes," replied he, "if we had peace; but if war continued, I would still put it in execution." Struck with these answers, the Emperor, with a magnanimity which formed at times a remarkable feature in his character, was desirous of saving his life; and directed Dr

Corvesart, who was in attendance, to feel his pulse, to see if he was in his sound senses. The physician reported that his pulse was slightly agitated, but that he was in perfect health. The young fanatic was sent to prison at Vienna; and though the Emperor for some time entertained thoughts of pardoning him, he was forgotten in the pressure of more important events; and after Napoleon's departure for Paris, he was brought before a military council, condemned, and executed. He evinced on the scaffold the same intrepidity which had distinguished his conduct when examined before Napoleon, and his last words were, "For God and the Fatherland!"¹ *

This singular event contributed as much, on the French side, to the conclusion of the negotiations, as the failure of the Walcheren expedition did on that of the Austrian cabinet. There might be more characters in Germany like Stabs: in a country so profoundly agitated, and containing, especially in its northern provinces, so many enthusiastic spirits, it was impossible to measure the personal danger which the Emperor might run, if hostilities were resumed. These considerations weighed powerfully with the cabinet of Schönbrunn. Napoleon gradually fell in his demands; and though the orders given were abundantly warlike, and the marshals were all at their posts, yet it was evident to those in the secret of the negotiations, that matters were approaching to an accommodation. The demand, on the part of France, of the line from the Danube to the Lake Aller, as the frontier towards Bavaria, gave rise to fresh difficulties at the very moment when all seemed concluded; for it deprived Austria on that side, of the mountain ridge which formed its true frontier, and gave the court of Munich the crest of the Hansruck, and part of the slope towards the eastward. But matters had gone too far to recede:² the cabinet of

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

¹ Sav. iv.
141, 145.
Pel. iv. 371.
Bign. viii.
371, 373.

39.
Which leads
to the con-
clusion of the
negotiation.

² Bign. viii.
360, 365.
Pel. iv. 370,
373. Bour.
vii. 247, 256.
Oct. 14.

* An adventure of a different character befell Napoleon at Schönbrunn during this period. A young Austrian lady of attractive person and noble family, fell so desperately in love with the *renown* of the Emperor, that she became willing to sacrifice to him her person, and was, by her own desire, introduced at night into his apartment. Though abundantly warm in his temperament, so far as physical enjoyments were concerned, and noways disquieted in the general case by any lingering qualms of conscience about Josephine, Napoleon was so much struck with the artless simplicity of this poor girl's mind, and the devoted character of her passion, that, after some conversation, he had her reconducted untouched to her own house.—See CONSTANT, *Mémoires de Napoleon*, iv. 236.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

40.
Peace of
Vienna.

Vienna was true to its principle of 'yielding when it could no longer resist; and Prince Lichtenstein, with tears in his eyes, signed the treaty, on the part of the Austrian government, at Vienna, on the 14th October.

By the peace of Vienna, Austria lost territories containing three millions and a half of inhabitants. She ceded to Bavaria the Inn-Viertel, and the Hansruck-Viertel, as well as Salzburg, with its adjacent territory, and the valley of Berchtesgaden; districts, the importance of which was not to be measured by their extent and population, but by the importance of their situation, lying on the ridge of mountains which separated the two monarchies, and taking a strong frontier from the one to bestow it upon the other. Portions of Galicia, to the extent of fifteen hundred thousand souls, were ceded to the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, and of four hundred thousand to Russia: and besides this, the Grand-duchy acquired the fortress and whole circle of Zamosc, in the eastern part of the same province. To the kingdom of Italy, Austria ceded Carniola, the circle of Villach in Carinthia, six districts of Croatia, Fiume and its territory on the sea-shore, Trieste, the county of Gorici, Montefalcone, Austrian Istria, Cartua and its dependent isles, the Thalweg of the Save, and the lordship of Radzuns in the Grisons. In addition to these immense sacrifices, the Emperor of Austria renounced, on the part of his brother, the Archduke Antony, the office of grand-master of the Teutonic Order, with all the rights and territories belonging to it. The Tyrol remained to its Bavarian masters: but the Emperor Francis stipulated for his brave and devoted children in that province an absolute and unconditional amnesty, as well in their persons as effects.¹

¹ See Treaty in Martens, iv. 618. Pel. iv. 468. Ann. Reg. 1809. App. to Chron. 733. State Papers.

* 41.
Its secret
articles.

In addition to these public articles, various secret ones were annexed to the treaty, of a kind still more humiliating to the House of Hapsburg. The treaty was, in the first place, declared common to Russia; next, the Emperor of Austria engaged to reduce his army, so that it should not exceed a hundred and fifty thousand men during the continuance of the maritime war; all persons born in France, Belgium, Piedmont, or the Venetian states, were to be dismissed from the Austrian service; and a contribution of 85,000,000 francs (£3,400,000) was

imposed on the provinces occupied by the French troops. By a letter of Napoleon to M. Daru, the intendant-general of the army and conquered provinces, it was specially enjoined that, "from the 1st April to the 1st October, every farthing expended on the army should be drawn from the conquered provinces, and all the advances between these periods made from France, restored to the public treasury."¹*

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

¹ Bign. viii.
379, 380.

The treaty of Vienna was received with marked disapprobation by the cabinet of St Petersburg; and it was attended with a most important effect in widening the breach which already existed between the two mighty rulers of continental Europe. In vain Napoleon assured Alexander that he had watched over his interests as he would have done over his own; the Russian autocrat could perceive no traces of that consideration in the dangerous augmentation of the territory and population of the Grand-duchy of Lithuania, and he openly testified to Caulaincourt his displeasure, referring to the date of his dismissal of General Gortschakoff for decisive evidence of the sincerity of his alliance.† In the midst of all his indignation, however, he made no scruple in accepting the portion of the spoils of Austria allotted as his share; and M. De St Julian, who was despatched from Vienna to persuade him to renounce that acquisition, found it impossible to induce the cabinet of St Petersburg to take to itself the sterile honours of disinterestedness. Napoleon, however, spared no efforts to appease the Czar; and being well aware that it was the secret dread of the restoration of Poland which was the spring of all his uneasiness, he engaged not only to concur with Alexander in every thing which should tend to efface ancient recollections, but even declared that he "was desirous that the name of Poland and of the Poles should disappear, not merely from every political transaction, but even from history." How fortunate that the eternal records of history are beyond the reach of the potentates who for a time oppress mankind!²

42.
Jealousy of
Russia at
the increase
of the Grand-
duchy from
this treaty.

² Champagny
to Alex-
ander, Oct.
20, 1809.
Bign. viii.
390.

Napoleon afterwards reproached himself at St Helena, with not having, at the treaty of Vienna, divided the three crowns of the Austrian empire, and thereby for ever

* See Appendix, A. Chap. ix.

† *Ante*, Chap. lviii. § 60.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

43.
Napoleon's
secret views
in this treaty.

prostrated its power and independence: and it is certain that, at one period of the negotiation, he not only threatened to adopt this extreme measure, but entertained serious intentions of carrying it into execution. His secret thoughts seem to have been divulged in a despatch to his minister for foreign affairs, of 15th September, in which he openly avows that his desire is either to separate the three crowns, or to form a sincere and durable alliance with the Austrian empire. Provided he could obtain a sufficient guarantee for that alliance, he was willing to leave the monarchy entire; but he thought there could be no security for it unless the throne were ceded to the Grand-duke of Wurzburg.* The Emperor Francis magnanimously agreed to the sacrifice, if it could have the effect of preserving the integrity of the monarchy; but it was not afterwards insisted on by Napoleon, who began, in the course of this negotiation, to conceive the idea of connecting himself with the Cæsars in a way still more personally flattering and likely to be more politically enduring. In truth, he foresaw that a rupture with Russia was inevitable at some future period; it was with the Czar that the real battle for supreme dominion was to be fought; and he clearly perceived the policy of not weakening too far the power which would form his right wing in the conflict.¹

No sooner was the treaty of Vienna ratified than Napoleon set out for Paris, and arrived at Fontainebleau on the 26th of October. Before leaving the Austrian capital,

* "I desire nothing from Austria," said Napoleon. "Gallicia is beyond my limits; Trieste is good for nothing but to be destroyed, since I have Venice. It is a matter of indifference to me whether Bavaria has a million more or less; my true interest is *either to separate the three crowns, or to contract an intimate alliance with the reigning family.* The separation of the three crowns is only to be obtained by resuming hostilities; an intimate alliance with the existing Emperor is difficult, because I have not entire confidence in his resolution." "I said to Prince Lichtenstein the other day: Let the Emperor cede the crown to the Grand-duke of Wurzburg, I will restore every thing to Austria without exacting any thing. M. de Bubna took me at my word, and said the Emperor was far from having any repugnance to such a sacrifice. I said I would accept it: that the base put forward at Altenburg was far from being unsusceptible of modifications. Insinuate to Count Metternich that if the Emperor is, on any account, inclined to cede the throne, (report says he is weary of royalty,) I will leave the monarchy entire. With the Grand-duke I will contract such an alliance as will speedily enable me to settle the affairs of the Continent: I have confidence in the character and good disposition of the Grand-duke: I would consider the repose of the world as secured by that event. You may say I can rely on the moral probity of the Emperor, but then he is always of the opinion of the last person who speaks; such men as Stadion and Baldacci will continue to exercise influence over him. That way of arranging matters would suit me well."—*NAPOLÉON to CHAMPAGNY, 15th Sept. 1809; Bignon, viii. 365-368.*

¹ O'Meara, ii. 199. Las Cases, iii. 139. Bignon, viii. 364, 368.

however, in the interval between the signature and ratification of the treaty, he gave orders for the barbarous and unnecessary act of blowing up its fortifications. Mines had previously been constructed under the principal bastions ; and the successive explosion of one after another, presented one of the most sublime and moving spectacles of the whole Revolutionary war. The ramparts, slowly raised in the air, suddenly swelled, and, bursting like so many volcanoes, scattered volumes of flame and smoke into the air ; showers of stones and fragments of masonry fell on all sides ; the subterraneous fire ran along the mines with a smothered roar, which froze every heart with terror ; one after another, the bastions were heaved up and exploded, till the city was enveloped on all sides by ruins, and the rattle of the falling masses broke the awful stillness of the capital. This cruel devastation produced the most profound impression at Vienna ; it exasperated the people more than the loss of half the monarchy would have done. These ramparts were the glory of the citizens ; shaded by trees, they formed delightful public walks ; they were associated with the most heart-stirring eras of their history ; they had withstood all the assaults of the Turks, and been witness to the heroism of Maria Theresa. To destroy these venerable monuments of former glory, not in the fury of assault, not under the pressure of necessity, but in cold blood, after peace had been signed, and when the invaders were preparing to withdraw, was justly felt as a wanton and unjustifiable act of military oppression. It brought the bitterness of conquest home to every man's breast : the iron had pierced into the soul of the nation. As a measure of military precaution it seemed unnecessary, when these walls had twice proved unable to arrest the invader ; as a preliminary to the cordial alliance which Napoleon desired, it was in the highest degree impolitic ; and its effects were felt by Napoleon, in the hour of his adversity, with terrible bitterness. The important lesson which it has left to the world, is the clear proof which it affords of that great general's opinion of the vital importance of central fortifications : he has told us himself, that, if Vienna could have held out three days longer, the fate of the campaign would have been changed :¹ but, while this truth is

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

44.

The ramparts
of Vienna
blown up.
Oct. 17.

Oct. 19.

¹ *Jom. II.*
314, 315.
Bign. viii.
375, 376.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

perhaps the lesson of all others most strongly illustrated by the events of the war, it is the last which the vanity of kings, and the thoughtlessness of the people, will permit to be read to any useful effect.

45.
Affairs of the
Tyrol after
the armistice
of Znaym.

July 12.

July 21.

While the cabinet of Vienna was thus yielding in the strife, and the last flames of this terrible conflagration were expiring on the banks of the Danube, the Tyrol continued the theatre of a desperate conflict, and the shepherds of the Alps, with mournful heroism, maintained their independence against a power which the Austrian monarchy had been unable to withstand. Having completely delivered their country, after the battle of Aspern, from the invaders, and spread themselves over the adjoining provinces of Bavaria, Vorarlberg, and Italy,* the brave mountaineers flattered themselves that their perils were over, and that a second victory on the Danube would speedily reunite them by indissoluble bonds to their beloved Emperor. Kufstein was besieged and on the point of surrendering, when the news of the battle of Wagram and the armistice of Znaym fell like a thunderbolt on their minds. Many of the insurgents, as was natural in such circumstances, gave up the cause as lost, and retired in deep dejection to their homes, while others, more resolute or desperate, redoubled in ardour, and seemed determined to spill the last drop of their blood rather than submit to the hated yoke of Bavaria. The chiefs of the insurrection, and the Austrian generals, who had again entered the country, were at first in a state of great perplexity, from uncertainty whether to yield to the summons of the French generals, who required them to evacuate the country, or the prayers of the inhabitants, who besought them to stand by them and defend it. The uncertainty of the soldiers, however, was removed by an order which arrived after the armistice of Znaym, for them to evacuate both the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, which they immediately prepared to obey. But the insurgents refused to acknowledge the convention, and declared they would submit to nothing but direct orders from the Emperor of Austria, who, they were confident, would never issue such commands, as he had promised to conclude no peace which

* *Ante*, Chap. lviii. § 48.

did not secure to him the possession of the Tyrol. Such was the fury of the people, that some of the most violent proposed to seize and disarm all the Austrian troops, and put the whole prisoners to death. And although Hormayer, Martin, and the real chiefs, did their utmost to calm the general effervescence and direct it to some useful object, yet they could not prevent many of the prisoners from falling victims to the ungovernable rage of the peasantry. In the midst of this heroic yet savage bewilderment, the general voice turned to Hofer; and his announcement, in a crowded assembly, that he would stand by them to the last drop of his blood, though it were only as chief of the peasants of Passeyr valley, was answered by a general shout, which proclaimed him "commander-in-chief of the province so long as it pleased God."¹

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

Dangers, however, of the most formidable kind were fast accumulating round the devoted province. The armistice of Znaym enabled Napoleon to detach overwhelming forces against the Tyrol; and he immediately set about the final reduction of the country. Marshal Lefebvre, at the head of twenty thousand men, renewed his invasion of the Innthal by the route of Salzburg; while Beaumont, with ten thousand, crossed the ridge of Scharnitz, and threatened Innspruck from the northern side. Both irruptions proved successful. In the confusion produced by the withdrawing of the Austrian authorities, and uncertainty whether or not the war was to be continued, the frontier defiles were left unguarded, and both columns of the enemy appeared without opposition before the steeples of Innspruck. The Archduke John and General Buol, who commanded the Austrian troops, successively issued proclamations to the people, announcing to them the conclusion of the armistice and stipulated evacuation of the Tyrol, and recommending to them to lay down their arms, and trust to the clemency of the Duke of Dantzic. Finding the peasants little inclined to follow their directions, Hormayer and Buol evacuated the capital with all the regular troops and cannon, taking the route over the Brenner, leaving the Tyrol to its fate.² Innspruck, destitute of defenders, immediately submitted, and the spectacle of thirty thousand French and Bavarians in possession of its chief

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 521,
530. Barth.
276, 280.

46.
Fresh invasion of the
Tyrol by
Marshal
Lefebvre.
July 20.

July 21.

July 29.

July 30.
² Gesch. A.
Hofer, 334,
342. Barth.
280, 290.

CHAP.
IX.

1809.

47.
Renewed
resolution of
the Tyrolese
to continue
the contest.

city, naturally spread the belief that the war in the Tyrol was terminated.

This, however, was very far from being the case; and Europe, amidst the consternation produced by the battle of Wagram, was speedily roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by the unconquerable resolution and astonishing victories of its gallant mountaineers. General Hormayer, who was well aware of the influence of Hofer over his countrymen, and despaired with reason of any further success in the contest, had used the utmost efforts to induce that renowned chief to follow him in his retreat. But all his efforts were ineffectual. Many of the chiefs, including even the resolute Spechbacher, had resolved to withdraw with the Austrian generals; but when he went to take leave of Hofer, the power of patriotic eloquence proved irresistible, and he was prevailed on to remain and stand by his country to the last. Even after this acquisition, however, that renowned chief was still the victim of contending feelings: patriotic ardour impelling him one way, and the obvious hopelessness of the attempt another. In the agony of indecision, he retired to a hermitage in the valley of Passeyr, where, amidst pines and rocks, he spent several days in solitude and prayer. Haspinger was equally undecided; and meanwhile the peasants, who were full of ardour and ready on all sides to take up arms, remained inactive for want of a leader to direct them. At length, however, the latter courageous chief had a meeting at Brixen with Martin Schenk, Peter Kemmater, and Peter Mayer, at which Schenk, who was the friend and confidant of Hofer, produced a letter from him, in which he implored them to make "one more effort on behalf of their beloved country." These rural heroes mutually pledged themselves to sacrifice their lives rather than abandon the holy cause; and, having concerted measures, Haspinger took the command of the peasants, while Hofer, who was summoned by the Duke of Dantzic to appear at Innsbruck on the 11th of August, returned for answer, "He would come, but it should be attended by ten thousand sharpshooters."¹

Hostilities commenced on the 4th of August by an attack on the advanced guard of the French and Bava-

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 345,
359. Barth.
294, 302.

July 29.

Aug. 2.

rians, who were descending the southern declivity of the Brenner, on the banks of the Eisach, between Sterzing and Brixen. The Tyrolese, under Haspinger, occupied the overhanging woods and cliffs which surrounded the bridge of Laditch, a little below Mittenwald, where the high-road from Bolsano to Innspruck crosses the Eisach. The French and Bavarians, little suspecting their danger, advanced incautiously down the defile. The woods were silent—no muskets or armed men appeared on the cliffs: but no sooner was a considerable body of the enemy, under General Rouyer, engaged in the defile, than a heavy fire burst forth on all sides; and, from amidst the leafy screen, the deadly bullets of the sharpshooters carried death with every discharge into the allied ranks. The column halted, fearful to advance, yet unwilling to recede; upon which the Tyrolese, with deafening shouts, burst forth from their concealment, and, mingling with the enemy, a frightful slaughter took place. Fresh troops, however, came up from the rear; courageous discipline prevailed over unskilled valour; and the Bavarian column pushed on towards the bridge. Suddenly a crackling sound was heard; a rattle of falling stones startled the horsemen in advance, and immediately after several gigantic firs, which had been cut, and supported huge masses of rock and heaps of rubbish on the heights above, came thundering down, and crushed whole squadrons and companies at a single blow. So awful was the crash, so complete the devastation, that both parties for a time suspended the conflict, and, amidst the death-like silence which ensued, the roar of the Eisach was distinctly heard. Undeterred, however, by this frightful catastrophe, the French advanced through a murderous fire, and surmounting the ruins which obstructed the road, and covered the bodies of their comrades, forced their way on to the bridge. Already, however, it was on fire: a Bavarian horseman attempted, with dauntless intrepidity, to cross the arch amidst the flames, but the burning rafters gave way, and he was precipitated into the torrent. Separated by the yawning gulf, over which there was no other passage, both parties desisted from the combat. Haspinger returned to Brixen to collect his scattered forces; and Rouyer,¹ weakened by the loss of twelve hundred

CHAP.
IX.

1809.

48.

Desperate
action at the
bridge of
Laditch.
Aug. 4.

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 560,
561. Barth.
304, 312.

- CHAP. men, remeasured his steps to Mittenwald and Sterzing, at
LX. the foot of the Brenner.*
1809. The successful issue of this extraordinary conflict produced, as might have been expected, a general outbreak in the Tyrol. Hofer descended the valley of Passeyr at the head of several thousand men, and joined Spechbacher on the Jaufen, the mountain ridge which overhangs, on the west and north, the northern slope of the Brenner, and ten thousand men soon flocked to their standard. The Bavarians, under General Steingel, made several attempts to dislodge them from this threatening position, which menaced the great road by Brixen to Italy, but they were constantly repulsed. COUNT WITTGENSTEIN, an officer destined to immortal celebrity in a more glorious war, succeeded, however, in again clearing of the enemy the road up the northern slope of the Brenner; and Marshal Lefebvre, encouraged by this success, put himself at the head of his whole corps, with the intention of forcing his way over that elevated ridge to the Italian Tyrol. But he had not advanced far, before his column, while winding in straggling files up the steep ascent, twenty miles in length, which leads to the summit of the pass, was beset on all sides. When the vanguard had reached Steinach, it was attacked in numberless points at once by the peasantry, and thrown back in disorder on the main body, which ere long fell into confusion. After an obstinate conflict, the whole, twenty thousand strong, were routed and driven back with immense loss to the bottom of the mountain. Such was the disorder, that the marshal himself arrived there disguised as a common trooper, on the evening of the 11th; and his followers—horse, foot, and cannon, mingled together—were rolled down in utter rout into Innspruck.¹ Twenty-five pieces of cannon, and the whole ammunition of the army, fell
- 49
Defeat of
Marshal
Lefebvre on
the Brenner.
Aug. 4.
- Aug. 5, 6.
- Aug. 10.
- Aug. 11.
¹ Gesch.
Hofer, 361,
367. Barth.
324, 330.
Pal. iv. 358.

* The scene of this memorable conflict is on the high-road from Brixen to Sterzing, about a mile below Mittenwald, shortly before it crosses the bridge of Ladtch. Every traveller from Italy to Germany, by the Tyrol, passes through it; but how few are aware of the heart-stirring deeds of which the wood-clad precipices, beneath which they roll in their carriages, have been the theatre! Sir Walter Scott places the action in the Upper Innthal, but this is a mistake.—See *Geschichte ANDREAS HOFER*, 560.—The author visited the scene in 1816, and he yet recollects, in all its vividness, the thrilling interest which it excited; the long black furrow produced by the falling masses, like the track of an avalanche, was even then, after the lapse of seven years, imperfectly obliterated by the bursting vegetation which the warmth of the Italian sun had awakened on these beautiful steepes.

into the hands of the victors, who, gathering strength like a mountain torrent with every tributary stream which crossed their course, soon appeared in great force on Mount Ysel and the heights which overhang the capital.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

Similar success in other quarters attended the efforts of the Tyrolese patriots. A body of seventeen hundred men, who advanced from Landeck through the Vintschgau, with the intention of falling on the rear of Hofer's people at Sterzing, was met at Prutz by a body of Tyrolese sharpshooters, and after a protracted contest of two days, totally defeated, with the loss of three hundred killed and nine hundred prisoners. At the same time General Rusca, in the Pusterthal, advanced with six thousand men from Carinthia to Lienz, where he perpetrated the most revolting atrocities, massacring every human being, of whatever age or sex, who fell in his way. At length a stop was put to his career by a body of armed peasants, who met him at the Lienzerclause, and after a bloody conflict drove him back, with the loss of twelve hundred men, to Sachsenburg; from which, hotly pursued with increasing fury by the peasantry, he retreated across the frontier into Carinthia, so that the whole of the Pusterthal was delivered from the enemy. At the same time a body of Italian troops, which had advanced from the neighbourhood of Verona with the design of co-operating with the corps of Lefebvre in its descent from the Brenner, alarmed at the general insurrection of the valley of the Adige, fell back, harassed by a cloud of peasants, to the Italian frontier, and the whole of the southern Tyrol was restored to the arms of the Tyrolese.¹

50.
Successes in
other
quarters.
Aug. 8.

Aug. 9.

Aug. 10.

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 566,
567. Barth.
330, 334.

Animated by these unlooked-for successes, the patriots no longer stood on the defensive, but, flocking from all quarters to the standard of Hofer, assembled in great multitudes on Mount Ysel, the scene of their former triumphs, and destined to be immortalised by a still more extraordinary victory. Lefebvre had collected his whole force, consisting of twenty-five thousand men, of whom two thousand were horse, with forty pieces of cannon, on the little plain which lies between Innspruck and the foot of the mountains on the other side of the Inn. They were far from being animated, however, by their wonted spirit; the repeated defeats they had experienced had

51.
Total defeat
of Lefebvre
at Innspruck.
Aug. 12.

CHAP.
IX.

1809.

inspired them with that mysterious dread of the mountaineers, with which regular troops are so often seized, when, contrary to expectation, they have been worsted by bodies of men undisciplined. A secret feeling of the injustice of their cause, and the heroism with which they had been resisted, paralysed many an arm which had never trembled before a regular enemy. The Tyrolese consisted of eighteen thousand men, three hundred of whom were Austrian soldiers who had refused to follow their officers, and remained to share the fate of the inhabitants: they were tolerably supplied with ammunition, but had few provisions, in consequence of which several hundred peasants had already gone back to their homes. Spechbacher commanded the right wing, whose line extended from the heights of Passberg to the bridges of Hall and Volders; Hofer was with the centre, and had his headquarters at the inn of Spade, on the Schönberg; Haspinger directed the left, and advanced by Mutters. At four in the morning, the brave Capuchin roused Hofer from sleep, and, having first united with him in fervent prayer, hurried out to communicate his orders to the outposts. The battle commenced at six, and continued without intermission till midnight; the Bavarians constantly endeavouring to drive the Tyrolese from their position on Mount Ysel, and they, in their turn, to force the enemy back into the town of Innsbruck. For long the contest was undecided,—the superior discipline and admirable artillery of the enemy prevailing over the impetuous but disorderly assaults and deadly aim of the mountaineers. But towards nightfall, the bridge of the Sill was carried after a desperate struggle; and their left flank being thus turned, the French and Bavarians gave way on all sides, and were pursued with great slaughter into the town. The Bavarians lost six thousand men, of whom seventeen hundred wounded fell into the hands of the Tyrolese; while on the side of the latter, not more than nine hundred had fallen.¹

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 372,
376. Barth.
336, 342.
Pel. iv. 358.

This great victory was immediately followed by the liberation of the whole Tyrol. Lefebvre fell back across the Inn on the day after the battle, and evacuating Innsbruck, retreated rapidly to Kufstein, and from thence to

Salzburg, where his whole army was collected on the 20th. Spechbacher followed with a large body of peasants, and destroyed a considerable part of the rearguard at Schwatz; while Hofer made his triumphant entry into Innsbruck, and took up his residence in the Imperial castle, where his presence was very necessary to check the disorders consequent on the irruption of so large a body of tumultuous patriots into an opulent city. The entire command of the country was now assumed by this chief. Proclamations were issued, and coins struck in his name, as commander-in-chief of the Tyrol; and the whole civil and military preparations were submitted to his directions. While exercising these exalted functions, however, he still retained the simplicity of his rustic dress and manners: he wore nothing but his country jerkin and clouted shoes; his long beard was retained, but his broad-brimmed hat was exchanged for one with a plume, and bearing an inscription to him as commander-in-chief of the Tyrol, the gift of the holy sisterhood of Innsbruck.¹

It soon appeared, however, that their renowned chief was not qualified for the duties of government: he interfered in an irregular and capricious way, though from pure motives, with the administration of justice, and was more occupied with terminating the private quarrels of his countrymen than warding off their public dangers. Among other attempts, he spent much time in endeavouring to reconcile the disputes of married persons—an undertaking which gave him ample employment.

Meanwhile, Ersenstecken and Sieberer, who had both distinguished themselves in the commencement of the war, but subsequently retired with the Austrian troops, returned to their countrymen to share at all hazards their fate: the former bore a gold medal and chain, which were presented to Hofer by the Emperor of Austria, and with which he was formally invested in the great church of Innsbruck, at the foot of the tomb of Maximilian, by the abbot of Wilten, amidst the tears and acclamations of a vast concourse of spectators; while two deputies, Muller and Schonecher, who contrived to elude the vigilance of the French sentinels who surrounded the country,² and made their way to England to implore the aid of the British

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

52.
Hofer's deliverance and government of Tyrol.
Aug. 15.

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 376,
390. Barth.
346, 350.

53.
Faults of his government.

Sept. 23.

Oct. 4.

² Gesch. A.
Hofer, 376,
405. Barth.
346, 360.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

54.
Preparations
of Napoleon
for the sub-
jugation of
the Tyrol.

government, were received with heartfelt kindness by all classes, and filled the nation, and through it the world, with unbounded admiration of their countrymen's exploits.

But darker days were approaching; and the Tyrolese war was destined to add another to the numerous proofs which history affords, that no amount of patriotism, however great, and no prodigies of valour, however marvellous, not even when aided by the enthusiasm of religion and the strength of mountains, can successfully maintain a protracted resistance against a numerous and well-conducted enemy, if destitute of the organisation and support of a regular government. Popular enthusiasm, often irresistible in the outset, and while the general effervescence lasts, is incapable of the steady and enduring efforts necessary in combating the forces of an established monarchy ably and perseveringly directed. Like the French Vendéans, or the Scotch Highlanders in 1745, the Tyrolese for the most part returned home after the victory of Innsbruck. In their simplicity they thought the contest was over, now that the invaders were again chased from the valley of the Inn; and thus the frontier passes were left guarded only by a few hundred men, wholly inadequate to protect them from the incursions of the enemy. Meanwhile Napoleon, now thoroughly roused, and justly apprehensive of the fatal blow which the continued independence of this mountainous district in the midst of his dominions would inflict on his power, was preparing such immense forces for a renewed attack on the country, as rendered its subjugation a matter of certainty. In the south, General Peyri, at the head of ten thousand men, received orders to advance from Verona, and make himself master of Trent at all hazards; Rusca was intrusted with the command of three divisions, eighteen thousand strong, which were to enter the Pusterthal from Villach and Carinthia; while three Bavarian divisions, under Drouet, mustering twenty thousand veterans, were to break in by the pass of Strub and the Salzburg frontier. These great forces were the more to be dreaded, that they would arrive simultaneously in the country at the very moment when all hearts were frozen by the intelligence of the conclusion of a treaty of peace by Austria, in which the Tyrol was abandoned;¹ and when the first appearance

Oct. 10.

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 405,
408. Thib.
vii. 410. Pel.
iv. 480.

of the winter snows was driving the peasants and their herds from the elevated pastures in the mountains to the lower valleys, in which they might be easily reached by the invading columns.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

Under such difficult and disheartening circumstances, it was hardly to be expected, and certainly not to be wished, that the resistance of the Tyrolese should be further protracted; but such was the unconquerable spirit of the people, that for three months longer they continued obstinately to contend for their independence. Their frontiers

55.
Successful
invasion of
the country
on all sides.

were in the first instance forced on all sides: Peyri defeated a body of Tyrolese and Austrians at Ampezzo on the Adige, and, after making himself master of Trent and Roveredo, advanced to the celebrated position of Lavis, from whence the peasants were driven with great loss. On the northern and eastern frontiers affairs were equally discouraging. Spechbacher, who occupied the important pass of Strub, the only entrance from the Salzburg territory, with a few hundred peasants, was unexpectedly attacked at daybreak, on the 18th October, and defeated

Oct. 17.

with considerable loss; and what to him was a heart-rending misfortune, his little son Andrew, a boy of eleven years of age, who had escaped from his place of seclusion in the mountains to join his father in the field, was made prisoner fighting by his side.* Spechbacher himself was struck down, desperately wounded, and only made his escape by the assistance of his brave friends, who, fighting the whole way, carried him up the almost inaccessible cliffs on the side of the pass, where the Bavarian soldiers could not follow them. The invaders now inundated the valley of the Inn: Hofer, almost deserted by his followers, was unable to maintain himself at Innsbruck,¹ but retiring to Mount Ysel, the scene of his

Oct. 18.

Oct. 24.
1 Gesch. A.
Hofer, 409,
416. Barth.
374, 380.

* Spechbacher was struck down by repeated blows with the butt-end of a musket, and, when he regained his feet, he found his little son had been carried off from his side. Wounded and bleeding as he was, he no sooner discovered his loss than he called on his followers to return to the rescue; but, for the first time in the war, they refused to follow him. Little Andrew was told his father was dead, and to convince him that he was so, the Bavarian soldiers produced his sabre and some part of his dress, all bloody, which had been lost in the struggle. On seeing them, he wept bitterly, but soon regained his composure, and marched in sullen silence with his fellow-prisoners. At Munich, he was presented to the King, who treated him with much kindness, and placed him in the royal seminary. In after times, and under happier auspices, this heroic family were reunited, under their beloved Emperor's sway.—See BARTHOLDY, *der Krieg der Tyroler Landleute, in Jahre 1809*, p. 378, 379.

- CHAP. LX.**
1809. former victories, still maintained with mournful resolution the standard of independence.
- 56.** Eugene Beauharnais, who was intrusted with the direction of all the invading columns, now issued a proclamation from Villach, in which, after announcing the conclusion of peace between France and Austria, he called on the people to submit, and offered them, on that condition, an unrestricted amnesty for the past. At the same time the Archduke John, in a proclamation, strongly counselled them to relinquish the contest, and with a heavy heart announced that no further aid or countenance could be given them by the Austrian government. In these circumstances, Hofer had no course left but submission: he withdrew to Steinach, from whence he wrote to General Drouet, offering to stop hostilities; and a few days after issued a proclamation, in which he counselled the people, as peace had been concluded, to lay down their arms, and trust "for pardon and oblivion of the past to the greatness of soul of Napoleon, whose footsteps were guided by a power of a superior order, which it was no longer permitted them to resist." But, in a few days after, finding that the inhabitants of his beloved valleys were still in arms, and that further resistance was resolved on, he issued another proclamation, in which he ascribed his former intention to the advice of evil counsellors, and called on the people "still to combat in defence of your native country. I shall fight with you, and for you, as a father for his children."
- 1** Gesch. A. Hofer, 424, 436. Barth. 382, 384. Thib. vii. 411. War was then resumed in every quarter: but the forces brought from all sides against the Tyrol were so immense, that no hope remained to the inhabitants, except that of throwing, by deeds of glory, a last radiance round their fall.¹
- 57.** Rusca and Baraguay d'Hilliers entered the Pusterthal from Carinthia, with twenty thousand men, in the beginning of November. Unable to resist so overwhelming a force, the Tyrolese fell back, fighting all the way, to the Mülbacher-clause, which they made good for two days with the most determined bravery, and were only compelled to evacuate on the third, from their position being turned by a circuitous path through the mountains. All the principal valleys were now inundated by French troops. Brixen was occupied; and the Bavarians from Innsbruck
- Hofer resolves to submit, and publishes a proclamation to that effect. Oct. 25.**
- Oct. 21.**
- Oct. 29.**
- Nov. 8.**
- Nov. 15.**
- Last invasion of the Tyrol, and desperate resistance.**
- Nov. 3.**
- Nov. 6.**

CHAP.
 LX.
 1809.

having surmounted the Brenner with little opposition, the victorious columns united at Sterzing, and, with fifteen thousand men, threatened the Passeyrthal from the eastward ; while an equal force, under Peyri, followed the banks of the Adige, and approached the only district remaining in arms by the southern side. Thus the insurrection was at last cooped up within very narrow limits, and, in fact, confined to Hofer's native valley. But though assailed by forces so immense, and driven by the snow in the higher grounds down to the banks of the Adige, the peasants still showed an undaunted front ; and Rusca having incautiously advanced to the old castle of the Tyrol, and dispersed part of his forces to obtain the delivery of arms from the inhabitants, he was attacked by Haspinger, aided by Thalgueter and Trogger, two rustic leaders, and totally defeated, with the loss of six hundred killed and wounded, and seventeen hundred prisoners. Thalgueter fell in this action, at the very moment he was taking an eagle from the enemy.¹

¹ Gesch. A.
 Hofer, 436,
 444, Barth.
 384, 386.

This unexpected success again set the whole neighbouring valleys in a flame ; but the storms of winter having set in, and the mountains become covered with their snowy mantle, want of provisions compelled the inhabitants to submit. The natives of those elevated regions, who maintain themselves by the produce of the dairy or the sale of their manufactures, were ruined by the exactions of the contending armies, and beheld with despair their families threatened with famine by the burning of their houses by the French soldiers, and stoppage of the wonted supplies of grain from the Italian plains. Before the middle of December, almost all the chiefs had taken advantage of an amnesty, pressed with generous earnestness upon the people by Eugene Beauharnais and Baraguay d'Hilliers, and joined a large party of Tyrolese emigrants at Waradein, while the peasants, in sullen grief, returned to their homes.²

^{58.}
 Final conquest of the country.

² Gesch. A.
 Hofer, 436.
 452. Barth.
 385, 390.
 Thib. vii. 412.

Animated by the respect of true soldiers for a gallant adversary, both these brave generals were unwearied in their efforts to induce Hofer to submit ; and they would have done any thing to extricate him from his perilous situation. *But, though grievously depressed and per-

⁵⁹
 Betrayal and seizure of Hofer.

CHAP.
LX.

1810.

plexed, he refused to accompany his friends in their flight, or humble himself by submission to the conquerors. Retiring to his native valley, he long eluded the search of the victors. His place of concealment was a solitary alpine hut, four leagues distant from his home, in general inaccessible from the snow which surrounded it. In that deep solitude he was furnished, by stealth, with provisions by a few faithful followers, and more than once visited by secret messengers from the Emperor of Austria, who in vain used every entreaty to induce him to abandon the Tyrol, and accept an asylum in the Imperial dominions. But Hofer steadily refused all their offers, declaring his resolution to be fixed never to abandon his country or family. He even resisted all their entreaties to shave his beard, or use any disguise which might prevent his person from being known to the enemy. At length, he was seized by a French force of sixteen hundred men, led by Donay, once his intimate friend, whom the magnitude of the reward induced to betray his benefactor. Two thousand more were in readiness to support them. The column set out at midnight, and, after marching four leagues over ice and snow, surrounded the hut at five in the morning of the

Jan. 5, 1810.

5th January. No sooner did Hofer hear the voice of the officer inquiring for him than he quietly came to the door, and delivered himself up. He was immediately bound, and marched down his beloved valley, amidst the tears of the inhabitants and the shouts of the French soldiers, to Bolsano, and thence by Trent to Mantua.¹

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 446,
450. Barth.
396, 400.

60.
His trial and
condemnation.

On his journey he was treated by the French officers, and particularly General Baraguay d'Hilliers, with the kindness which true valour ever pays to misfortune, and which, in his case, was well deserved by the efforts he had uniformly made to protect the French prisoners who fell into his hands. On his arrival at Mantua, a court-martial was immediately summoned, with General Bisson, the governor of the fortress, whom he had formerly vanquished, at its head, to try him for combating against the French after the last proclamation of Eugene Beauharnais offering a general amnesty. The proceedings were very short, as the facts charged were at once admitted by the accused ; but, notwithstanding this, a very

great difference of opinion prevailed as to the punishment to be inflicted. A majority were for confinement ; two had the courage to vote for his entire deliverance : but a telegraphic despatch from Milan decided the question, by ordering his death within twenty-four hours, thus putting it out of the power of Austria to interfere. He received his sentence with unshaken firmness, though he had no idea previously that his life was endangered ; and only requested that he might be attended by a confessor, which was immediately complied with. By this priest, Manifesti, who never quitted him till his death, he transmitted his last adieus to his family, and gave him everything he possessed to be delivered to his countrymen, consisting of five hundred florins in Austrian bank-notes, his silver snuff-box and beautiful rosary, which he had constantly carried about with him. In the intervals of religious duty he conversed eagerly about the Tyrolese war, expressing always his firm conviction that sooner or later his countrymen would be reunited to the Austrian government.¹

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

¹ Gesch. A.
Hofer, 446.
451. Barth.
396.

On the following morning he was led out to execution. As he passed by the barracks on the Porta Molina, where the Tyrolese prisoners were confined, they fell on their knees and wept aloud. Those who were near enough to approach his escort, threw themselves on the ground and implored his blessing. This he freely gave them, requesting their forgiveness for the misfortunes in which he had involved their country, and assuring them that he felt confident they would ere long return under the dominion of their beloved Emperor, to whom he cried out his last "*Vivat !*" with a clear and steady voice. On the broad bastion, a little distance from the Porta Ceresa, the grenadiers formed a square, open in the rear, while twelve men and a corporal stood forth with loaded pieces. A drummer offered Hofer a white handkerchief to bandage his eyes, and requested him to kneel ; but this he refused, saying "that he was used to stand upright before his Creator, and in that posture he would deliver up his spirit to him." Having then presented the corporal who commanded the detachment with his whole remaining property, consisting of twenty kreutzers,² and uttered a few words expressive of attachment to his sovereign and

61.
His execu-
tion.

² Gesch. A.
Hofer, 453,
456. Ingll's
Tyrol, ii. 223,
224.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

country, he faced the guard, and with a loud voice pronounced the word "Fire!" On the first discharge he sank only on one knee: a merciful shot, however, at length despatched him.

62.
Reflections
on this event.

Few events in the history of Napoleon have cast a darker stain on his memory than this ungenerous slaughter of a brave and heroic antagonist. Admitting that the unutterable miseries of civil war sometimes render it indispensable for the laws of all countries to punish with death even the most elevated virtue, when enlisted on the side which ultimately is vanquished, it can hardly be said that the resistance of the Tyrolese to the Bavarian yoke partook of that character. It was truly a national contest. The object in view was not to rise up in rebellion against a constituted government, but to restore a lost province to the Austrian monarchy. The people had been forcibly transferred, only a few years before, against their will, from the sway of their beloved Emperor to the rude oppression of a foreign throne; the dominion of four years could not obliterate the recollections of four centuries. In that very war Napoleon had himself issued a proclamation, calling upon the Hungarians to throw off their allegiance to Austria, and re-assert, after its extinction for centuries, their national independence.* Hofer had never sworn allegiance to the French Emperor; he had never held office under his government, nor tasted of his bounty; yet what invectives have Napoleon and his panegyrists heaped upon the Bourbons in 1815, for visiting with severity the defection of the leaders of the French army, during the Hundred Days, who had done both! If Ney was murdered, because, after swearing to bring back Napoleon in an iron cage, vanquished by old recollections, he gave the example, himself a marshal at the head of an army, of deserting the sovereign who had elevated him to its command; what are

* "Hungarians! the moment has arrived to claim your independence. I offer you peace, the integrity of your territory, of your liberty, and constitutions. Your alliance with Austria has been the cause of all your misfortunes: you form the largest portion of its empire, and yet your dearest interests have always been sacrificed to those of the Hereditary States. Resume, then, your rank as an independent nation; choose a king who may permanently reside amongst you, who may be surrounded only by your citizens and soldiers. Hungarians! that is what Europe demands, what I offer you."—*NAPOLEON'S Proclamation to the Hungarians, Vienna, 13th May 1809*; SCHÖELL, *Hist. des Trait.* ix. 245.

we to say of Hofer, a simple mountaineer, who, without employment or command under Bavaria, merely strove to restore his country to the recollections and the ties of four centuries? Even if his life had been clearly forfeited by the laws of war, a generous foe, won by his bravery, penetrated with his devotion, would only have seen in that circumstance an additional reason for sealing the glories of Wagram by an act of mercy, which would have won every noble bosom to his cause. But though not destitute of humane emotions, Napoleon was steeled against every sentiment which had the semblance even of militating against reasons of state policy; and such was the force of his selfish feelings, that he was actuated by an indelible rancour towards all who in any degree thwarted his ambition. The execution of Hofer was the work of the same spirit which, carrying its hostility beyond the grave, bequeathed a legacy to the assassin who had attempted the life of Wellington.

Peter Mayer, having been tried at Botzen, was also shot, and behaved with equal heroism in his last moments. Haspinger, who put no faith either in the promises of pardon held out by Eugene or the visions of celestial succour declared by Kolb, a fanatic who was mainly instrumental in exciting the last unhappy insurrection, succeeded, after a very long time, in escaping into Switzerland, by the way of St Gall and Einsiedlen, in the dress of a monk, from whence he contrived, by cross paths through Friuli and Carinthia, to reach Vienna, where he received protection from the Emperor. Spechbacher, after the unfortunate action at the pass of Strub, where his son Andrew was made prisoner, was actively pursued by the Bavarians, who set a large price upon his head; and he was frequently obliged to shift his place of concealment to avoid discovery. He was at one time surrounded in a retreat by a party of Bavarian soldiers, who had been led to his house by a faithless wretch; but he escaped upon the roof, and, leaping thence, made his way into an adjoining forest, where he was secreted nearly a month, and endured the utmost pangs of hunger. Wandering in this manner, he by accident met his wife and infant children, like him flying from persecution and death, and perishing of want and cold.

CHAP.
LX.
1809.

63.
Adventures
of Haspinger
and Spech-
bacher.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

¹ Barth. 438,
450. Inglis's
Tyrol, ii. 227,
230.

64.
Extraordi-
nary adven-
ture and
escape of the
latter.

They at length obtained a refuge in the house of a generous peasant, in the village of Volderberg, where they were concealed together several weeks. But his retreat having been discovered, Spechbacher was obliged to fly to the higher mountains, where, on one of the summits of the Eisgletscherr, in a cavern discovered by him in former times when pursuing the chamois, he lay for several weeks in the depth of winter, supported by salt provisions, eaten raw, lest the smoke of a fire should betray his place of concealment to his pursuers.¹

Happening one day, in the beginning of March, to walk to the entrance for a few minutes to enjoy the ascending sun, an avalanche, descending from the summit of the mountain above, swept him along with it down to the distance of half a mile on the slope beneath, and dislocated his hip-bone in the fall. Unable now to stand, surrounded by ice and snow, tracked on every side by ruthless pursuers, his situation was to all appearance desperate; but even then the unconquerable energy of his mind, and incorruptible fidelity of his friends, saved him from destruction. Summoning up all his courage, he contrived to drag himself along the snow for several leagues during the night, to the village of Volderberg, where, to avoid discovery, he crept into the stable. His faithful friend gave him a kind reception, and carried him on his back to Rinn, where his wife and children were, and where his devoted domestic, George Zoppel, concealed him in a hole in the cow-house beneath where the cattle stood, though beyond the reach of their feet, where he was covered up with cow-dung and fodder, and remained for two months, till his leg was set and he was able to walk. The town was full of Bavarian troops; but this extraordinary place of concealment was never discovered, even when the Bavarian dragoons, as was very frequently the case, were in the stable looking after their horses. Zoppel did not even inform Spechbacher's wife of her husband's return, lest her emotion or visits to the place should betray his place of concealment. At length, in the beginning of May, the Bavarian soldiers having left the house, Spechbacher was lifted from his living grave, and restored to his wife and children. As soon as he was able to walk he set out, and,

journeying chiefly in the night, through the wildest and most secluded Alps, by Dux and the sources of the Salza, he passed the Styrian Alps, where he crossed the frontier, and reached Vienna in safety. There he was soon after joined by his wife and children; and the Emperor's bounty provided both for them and Hofer's orphan family, with not undeserved munificence, till, on the restoration of the Tyrol to the House of Hapsburg, they returned to their native valleys, and Spechbacher died at Hall, in 1830, of a weakness in the chest, brought on by these unparalleled hardships. Little Andrew, then a man, who had been kindly treated at the court of Munich, was promoted to an official situation in the Tyrol, under the Austrian government; but the widow and children of Hofer remained under their father's roof in the valley of Passeyr.¹

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

¹ Barth. 438,
474. Inglis'
Tyrol, ii. 227,
236.

Touching as is this record of simple virtue in the mountaineers of Tyrol, another event of still more surpassing interest, and attended by yet more momentous consequences, occurred in this eventful year. This was the dethronement and imprisonment of the Pope, and the annexation of the patrimony of St Peter and of the Eternal City to the French empire.

65.
Affairs of the
Holy See.
Original
causes of dis-
content on
the part of
the Pope at
Napoleon.

When Pius VII., contrary to the usage of his predecessors, agreed to leave the Quirinal Hill and cross the Alps in the depth of winter, to place the crown on the brows of the French Emperor, he naturally expected that some great and durable benefit would accrue to himself and his successors from the unwonted act of condescension. The flattering reception which he met with at Paris, the delicate attentions of all the functionaries of the imperial palace, and the marked regard of the Emperor himself, confirmed these flattering illusions; and the papal suite returned into Italy charmed with their visit, and never doubting that, at the very least, the restoration of the three legations in Romagna, torn from the Holy See by the treaty of Tolentino in 1797, might with confidence be relied on.* M. Fontanes, the orator of government, had enlarged, in eloquent and touching terms, on the magnificent spectacle afforded by the re-conversion of the first

* *Ante*, Chap. xx. § 152.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

of European states to the Christian and Catholic faith. "When the conqueror of Marengo," said he, "conceived on the field of battle the design of re-establishing the unity of religion, and restoring to the French their ancient worship, he rescued civilisation from impending ruin. Day for ever memorable ! dear alike to the wisdom of the statesman and the faith of the Christian ! It was then that France, abjuring the greatest errors, gave the most useful lesson to the world. She recognised the eternal truth, that irreligious ideas are impolitic, and that every attempt against Christianity is a stroke levelled at the best interests of humanity. Universal homage is due to the august pontiff who, renewing the virtues of the apostolic age, has consecrated the new destinies of the French empire, and clothed it with the lustre of the days of Clovis and Pepin. Every thing has changed around the Catholic faith, but it remains the same ! It beholds the rise and fall of empires ; but amidst their ruins, equally as their grandeur, it sees the working out of the divine administration. Never did the universe witness such a spectacle as is now exhibited : the days are past when the empire and the papacy were rival powers. Cordially united, they now go hand in hand to arrest the fatal doctrines which have menaced Europe with a total subversion : may they yield to the combined influence of religion and wisdom !"¹

¹ Artaud,
Hist. de Pius
VII. t. 509,
and 504.

66.
Dazzling reception of the Pope at Paris in 1806, but his request for the restoration of the marches is refused.

It is not surprising that such a reception from the conqueror who had filled the world with his renown, and such a prospect of reconverting to its pristine faith the first of the European monarchies, should have dazzled the eyes not only of the Pope but of the whole conclave. But amidst the universal illusion, it did not escape, even at that time, the observation of some of the able statesmen who directed the cabinet of Rome, that flattering as these attentions and expressions were, they were all general, and bore reference only to the *spiritual* extension of the papal sway. Ardently as some temporal advantages were desired, both the Emperor and his diplomatists had carefully avoided holding out any distinct pledge, even the most indirect, of such concessions. Of this a painful proof was soon afforded. Shortly after his return, Pius VII. transmitted a memorial to Napoleon, in

which he enumerated the losses which the Holy See had sustained from the French government during the progress of the war, and strongly urged him to imitate the example of Charlemagne, and restore all their possessions. It was no part of the system of Napoleon to permit the imperial eagles to recede from any territory which they had once occupied; and in a studied answer drawn up by the Emperor himself, while he expressed boundless anxiety for the spiritual exaltation of the Holy See, and even admitted a desire, if "the occasion should offer," to augment its temporal advantages; yet he distinctly announced that this must not be expected from any interference with existing arrangements, or diminution of the territory of the kingdom of Italy, to which these acquisitions had been annexed. Repeated attempts were afterwards made by the Papal government to obtain some relaxation or concession in this particular; but they were always either eluded or met by a direct refusal.¹

CHAP.
LX.
1805.

Feb. 26, 1805.
March 11.

¹ Pope Pius
vii. to Nap.
Feb. 21; and
Nap. to Pius
vii. March
11, 1805.
Artaud, li.
25, 33.

Still more decisive events speedily demonstrated that, amidst all Napoleon's professions of regard, which he really felt, for the spiritual authority of the successors of St Peter, he had no intention of adding to their territorial influence, or of treating them in any other way than as his own vassals, who in every part of their temporal administration were to take the law from the cabinet of the Tuileries. In October 1805, during the course of the Austrian war, the French troops seized upon Ancona, the most important fortress in the ecclesiastical dominions; and the remonstrances of the Pope against this violent invasion were not entirely disregarded, but Napoleon in reply, openly asserted the principle that he was Emperor of Rome, and the Pope was only his viceroy.* The haughty and disdainful terms of this letter, and the open announcement of an undisguised sovereignty over the Roman states, first opened the eyes of the benevolent Pontiff to the real intentions of the French Emperor: he returned an intrepid answer to the con-

67.

Farther en-
croachments
of France on
the Holy See.

Nov. 13, 1805.

Feb. 13, 1806.

* "All Italy must be subjected to my law: your situation requires that you should pay me the same respect in temporal which I do you in spiritual matters. Your Holiness must cease to have any delicacy towards my enemies and those of the church. *You are Sovereign of Rome, but I am its Emperor*: all my enemies must be its enemies; no Sardinian, English, Russian, or Swedish envoy can be permitted to reside at your capital.' *NAPOLEON to PIUS VII., 13th Feb. 1806*; ARTAUD, li. 113—118; BIGNON, vii. 137.

CHAP.
LX.

1806.

March 12,
1806.¹ Artaud, ii.
141. Bign.
vii. 137.68.
Unshaken
firmness of
the Pope.
June 11,
1806.² M. Al-
quier's Letter,
June 13, 1806;
Artaud, ii.
141, 142; and
Bign. vii. 137,
148.69.
Further de-
mands of
France, and
refusal of the
Pope.

queror of Austerlitz, that he recognised no earthly potentate as his superior; and from that hour may be dated the hostility which grew up betwixt them.* Napoleon, so far from relaxing in any of his demands, was only the more aroused, by this unexpected opposition, to increased exactions from the Holy See: his troops spread over the whole papal territory; Rome itself was surrounded by his battalions; and, within a half mile of the Quirinal palace, preparations were openly made for the siege of Gaeta.¹

Pius VII., however, was unshaken in his determination. "If they choose," said he, to M. Alquier, the French envoy, "to seize upon Rome, we shall make no resistance; but we shall refuse them the entry to the castle of St Angelo. All the important points of our dominions have been successively occupied by their troops, and the collectors of our taxes can no longer levy any imposts in the greater part of our territory, to provide for the contributions which have been imposed. We shall make no resistance, but your soldiers will require to burst open the gates with cannon-shot. Europe shall see how we are treated; and we shall at least prove that we have acted in conformity to our honour and our conscience. If they take away our life, the tomb will do us honour, and we shall be justified in the eyes of God and man."²

The French minister soon after intimated, that if the Pope continued on any terms with the enemies of France, the Emperor would be under the necessity of detaching the duchy of Urbino, the march of Ancona, and the seacoast of Civita Vecchia, from the ecclesiastical territories; but that he would greatly prefer remaining on amicable terms with his Holiness; and with that view he proposed, as the basis of a definitive arrangement between the two governments; 1. "That the ports of his Holiness should be closed to the British flag, on all occasions when Eng-

* "Your Majesty," said Pius VII., "lays it down as a fundamental principle, that you are sovereign of Rome: the Supreme Pontiff recognises no such authority, nor any power superior in temporal matters to his own. There is no Emperor of Rome: it was not thus that Charlemagne treated our predecessors. The demand to dismiss the envoys of Russia, England, and Sweden, is positively refused: the Father of the Faithful is bound to remain at peace with all, without distinction of Catholics or heretics."—PIUS VII. to NAPOLEON, 12th March 1806; ARTAUD, ii. 121, 123.

land was at war with France: 2. That the papal fortresses should be occupied by the French troops, on all occasions when a foreign land force is debarked on *or menaces* the coasts of Italy." To these proposals, which amounted to a complete surrender of the shadow even of independence, the Pope returned a respectful but firm refusal, which concluded with these words: "His Majesty may, whenever he pleases, execute his menaces, and take from us whatever we possess. We are resigned to every thing, and shall never be so rash as to attempt resistance. Should he desire it, we shall instantly retire to a convent, or the catacombs of Rome, like the first successors of St Peter: but let him not think, as long as we are intrusted with the responsibility of power, to make us by menaces violate its duties."¹

CHAP.
LX.

1806.

July 8, 1806.

¹ Artaud, ii.
147, 151.
Bign. vii.

The overwhelming interest of the campaign of Jena and Eylau, for a time diverted the attention of Napoleon from the affairs of Italy; but no sooner was he relieved by the peace of Tilsit from the weight of the Russian war, than he renewed his attempts to break down the resistance of the ecclesiastical government, and was peculiarly indignant at some hints which he had heard, that the Pope, if driven to extremities, might possibly launch against his head the thunders of the Vatican. A fresh negotiation was nevertheless opened; Napoleon insisting that the court of Rome should rigidly enforce the Berlin and Milan decrees in its dominions, shut its ports against the English flag, permit and maintain a permanent French garrison at Ancona, and allow the march of French columns through its territories. The Pope expressed his readiness to accede to these propositions, and to submit to their immediate execution, except the actual declaration of war against England: But the Emperor had other designs; and mere adherence to the continental system was far from being now sufficient.

70.
Renewed
mutual irri-
tations after
the peace of
Tilsit.

Oct. 11.

On the 2d February 1808, a large body of French troops entered Rome; which thereafter continued to be occupied by their battalions. The formidable force with which he was surrounded, had no effect in subduing the courage of the intrepid pontiff. Calling in M. Alquier on the day of their arrival, he thus addressed him:² "The Emperor insists on every thing, or nothing: you know to what

Feb. 2, 1808.

² Letter of
M. Alquier,
Jan. 29, 1808.
Bign. vii. 176.
Artaud, ii.
178, 180.

CHAP.
LX.

1808.

articles proposed I will consent: I cannot subscribe the others. There shall be no military resistance: I shall retire into the castle of St Angelo: not a shot shall be fired; but the Emperor will find it necessary to force its gates. I will place myself at the entry; the troops will require to pass over my body; and the universe will know that he has trampled under foot him whom the Almighty has anointed. God will do the rest.”*

71.
Entire as-
sumption of
the govern-
ment by the
French.
April 2.
March 16.

Insults and injuries continued to be heaped upon the head of the devoted Pontiff. The French troops did not, indeed, blow open the gates of the Quirinal palace; but the entire government of his dominions was taken from him. Soon after Signor Cavalehini, the Papal governor of Rome, an intrepid man, was seized and carried off by the French troops, and the military government of the capital was confided to the Imperial general Miollis; the Papal troops were informed, in a letter from Eugene Beauharnais, that he “congratulated them upon their emancipation from the rule of priests; that the Italian soldiers are now commanded by men who can lead them into fire; and that they are no longer obliged to receive their orders from women or monks.” Champagne officially intimated to the Papal government, “that the French troops would remain at Rome until the Holy Father had consented to join the general league, offensive and defensive, with Napoleon and the King of Naples;” while by an Imperial decree shortly after, the provinces of Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, and Camerino, about a third of the ecclesiastical territories, were declared to be irrevocably united to the kingdom of Italy.¹

Feb. 13.

April 2.
1 Bign. vii.
172, 179.
Artaud, ii.
179, 182.

Violent as these aggressions were, they were but the prelude to others still more serious. The Pope was confined a prisoner in his own palace. French guards occu-

* “What,” said Napoleon, in a confidential letter to Eugene Beauharnais at that period, “does Pius VII. mean by his threats of denouncing me to Châten-don? Does he mean to excommunicate me? Does he *suppose the arms will fall from the hands of my soldiers*? Would he put a poniard in the hands of my people to murder me? The Pope has taken the trouble to come to Paris to crown me; in that step I recognise the spirit of a true prelate; but he expected in return to get the three legations from the kingdom of Italy; but that I would not consent to.” The Pope at present is too powerful: priests are not made to govern. The rights of the tiara consist only in humiliation and prayer. I hold my crown from God and my people: I will always be Charlemagne to the court of Rome, and never Louis Debonnaire. Jesus Christ has not instituted a pilgrimage to Rome, as Mahomet has to Mecca.”—*Confidential Letter*, NAPOLEON to EUGENE, 22d July 1807; ARTAUD, ii. 166, 167; and BIGNON, vii. 159, 160.

pied all parts of the capital ; the administration of posts, the control of the press, were assumed by French authorities ; the taxes were levied for their behoof, and those imposed by the Papal government of its own authority annulled ; the Papal troops were incorporated with the French, and the Roman officers dismissed. The pontiff continued, under these multiplied injuries, to evince the same patience and resignation ; firmly protesting, both to Napoleon and the other European powers, against these usurpations, but making no attempt to resist them, and sedulously enjoining both his clergy and people to obey the intruded authority without opposition. CARDINAL PACCA, who was appointed secretary of state on the 18th June, was a prelate of powerful abilities, and of that intrepid but discerning character, which, disdaining all minor methods of resistance, aimed at bringing the great contest between the throne and the tiara at once to an issue on the most advantageous ground. He became, on this account, in an especial manner obnoxious to the Emperor ; and an attempt having been made by the French officers to carry him off and banish him from Rome, to detach the Pope from his energetic and manly councils, his Holiness, with great expressions of indignation, took him into his own apartments. They were more successful, however, in their attempt on Cardinal Antonelli, who was on the same day arrested by a sergeant and eight grenadiers, and instantly sent out of the ecclesiastical territories ; while a cordon of sentinels was stationed round the Quirinal, and no one allowed to pass out or in without being strictly examined. The Head of the Faithful was no longer any thing but a prisoner in his own palace. But all Napoleon's efforts to overcome his constancy were unavailing. More courageous and better advised than the Bourbon princes of Spain, the venerable Pontiff remained proof alike against the menaces and the wiles of the Imperial authorities ; no resignation could be extorted from him ; and, without ever crossing the threshold of his apartments, he calmly awaited the decree which was to consign him to destruction.¹

CHAP.
LX.

1808.

72.

Fresh outrages, and confinement of the Pope to his palace.

June 18.

Sept. 6.

¹ Cardinal Pacca, i. 347, 351. Artaud, ii. 196, 202. Hign. vii. 183, 180.

The last act of violence at length arrived. On the 17th May 1809, a decree was issued from the French camp at Schönbrunn, which declared "that the states of the Pope

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

73.

Annexation
of the Roman
states to the
French em-
pire. Excom-
munication of
Napoleon.
June 10,
1809.

are united to the French empire : the city of Rome, so interesting from its recollections, and the first seat of Christianity, is declared an imperial and free city ;" and proclaimed that these changes should take effect on the 1st June following. On the 10th June, these decrees were announced by the discharge of artillery from the castle of St Angelo, and the hoisting of the tricolor flag on its walls, in the place of the venerable pontifical standard. "Consummatum est !" exclaimed Cardinal Pacca and the Pope at the same instant ; and immediately, having obtained a copy of the decree, which the dethroned pontiff read with calmness, he authorised the publication of a BULL of EXCOMMUNICATION against Napoleon and all concerned in this spoliation, which, in anticipation of such an event, had been some time before prepared by the secret council of the Vatican. Early on the following morning, this bull was affixed on all the usual places, particularly on the churches of St Peter's, Santa Maria Maggiore, and St John, with such secrecy as to be accomplished without the knowledge or suspicion of the police. It was torn down as soon as discovered, and taken to General Miollis, who forthwith forwarded it to the Emperor at his camp at Vienna. The Pope expressed great anxiety, that care should be taken to conceal the persons engaged in printing and affixing on the churches this bull, as certain death awaited them if they were discovered by the French authorities ; but he had no fears whatever for himself.

¹ Artaud, ii.
202, 209.

See Bull in
Pacca, i. 355,
372. Bign.
viii. 279.

On the contrary, he not only signed it with his name, but had transcribed the whole document, which was of great length, with his own hand, lest any other person should be involved, by the handwriting being detected, in the vengeance of the French Emperor.¹

74.
Views of Na-
poleon in re-
gard to the
Pope, and
his transfe-
rence to Paris.

Napoleon was not prepared for so vigorous an act on the part of the council of the Vatican. He received accounts of it at Vienna, shortly before the battle of Wagram, and immediately resolved on the most decisive measures. For long he had meditated the transference of the seat of the popedom to Paris, and the acquisition to his authority of the immense influence to be derived from a personal control over the head of the Church. He had been much struck by an expression of the Emperor Alexander at Erfurth : "I experience no difficulty in affairs of

religion: I am the head of my own church."¹ Deeming it impossible, however, in modern Europe, to accomplish such a union directly, or place the pontifical tiara openly on the same brows as the Emperor's crown, he conceived the design of accomplishing the object indirectly, by procuring the transference of the residence of the Pope to Paris, and the incorporation of all his possessions with the imperial dominions; so that, both by reason of local position and entire dependence for income, he should be under the influence of the French Emperor. By this policy, which in his view was truly a master-stroke, he hoped to do more than could have been accomplished by the entire extinction of the papal authority. He did not intend the destruction of a rival power, but the addition of its influence to himself;* while the annexation of the ecclesiastical states to the French empire, in effect rendered his sway irresistible over all parts of the Italian peninsula.²

Accidental circumstances, however, precipitated matters more quickly than Napoleon intended, and gave him possession of the person of the Pope within a few days after the publication of the bull of excommunication. Measures of the last severity had been taken in vain. The palace of the Quirinal was surrounded with soldiers, a battery of forty pieces of cannon was established directly opposite its gates: but still the spirit of the illustrious captive was unsubdued, and no indication of a disposition to recall the fulminating decree had appeared. Miollis deemed the state of matters so alarming in the beginning of July, that he entered into communication with Murat at Naples, and their united opinion was, that

CHAP.
LX.

1800.

¹ Artaud, il.
170.

² Cardinal
Pacca, il. 14.
15. Nap. in
Las Cases, v.
262. Rot. iv.
347, 348.

75.
Arrest of the
Pope by
Radet.
July 5.

* "By keeping the Pope at Paris," said Napoleon, "and annexing the Roman states to my dominions, I had obtained the important object of separating his temporal from his spiritual authority; and, having done so, I would have elevated him beyond measure: I would have surrounded him with pomp and homage; I would have made him cease to regret his temporal authority; I would have rendered him an idol: *he should have had his residence near my person. Paris would have become the capital of the Christian world: I would have directed the religious world as well as the political.* It was an additional means of uniting all the parts of the empire, and keeping in peace whatever was beyond it. I would have had *my religious sessions* as well as my legislative: *my council* would have been the assembly of the representatives of Christianity; *the Popes* would have been *nothing but its presidents*: I would have opened and closed these assemblies, approved and published their decisions, as Constantine and Charlemagne did. That emancipation of the Church from the court of Rome, that union of the spiritual and temporal powers in the hands of one sovereign, had been long the object of my meditations and wishes."—LAS CASES, v. 262, 264.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

July 4.

it was indispensable to get immediate possession of the Pope's person, and remove him into France. In pursuance of this determination, which, though not expressly known to or authorised by the Emperor, was in conformity with his prior instructions, and known to be agreeable to his wishes, Miollis sent for General Radet on the 4th July, and communicated to him his design of carrying off the Pope, and intrusting the execution of the delicate task to him. Radet, albeit horror-struck with the task thus imposed upon him, knew his duty too well to hesitate in obeying his instructions; a strong battalion of troops arrived on the following day from Naples, and the military dispositions were quickly completed. At ten at night on the 5th, the Quirinal was surrounded by three regiments; thirty men escalated the walls of the garden in profound silence, and took post under the windows of the palace; fifty more succeeded in effecting an entrance by the window of an uninhabited room, and having dispersed some groups of domestics, who on the first alarm hastily assembled together, the gates were thrown open, and Radet entered at the head of his troops, who were ordered "to arrest the Pope and Cardinal Pacca, and conduct them immediately out of Rome."¹

July 5.

¹ Radet, Narrative de l'Enlev. de Pie VII. 7, 9. Artaud, ii. 214, 217. Pacca, i. 122, 123.

76.
Particulars of his seizure.

Though the assembly of the troops took place on the preceding night, it was not till six o'clock on the following morning that the entry of the palace itself was accomplished. The Pope and Cardinal Pacca were awakened by the strokes of the hatchets which broke down the interior doors, and both instantly rising, perceived from the tumult in the court, glitter of arms, and troops in all quarters, that the French had effected an entrance into the palace. The holy father expected immediate death; he called for the ring which his predecessor Pius VI. had worn in his last moments, the gift of Queen Clotilda; and, putting it on his finger, looked at it with calm satisfaction. To prevent further violence, the doors were thrown open, and Radet with his officers and gendarmes entered the apartment, where the Pope stood between Cardinal Pacca, Cardinal Despuig, and a few other faithful prelates. Radet then, in a respectful manner, pale and trembling with emotion, announced to his Holiness that he was charged with a painful duty; but that he

CHAP
LX.
1809.

was obliged to declare to him, that he must renounce the temporal sovereignty of Rome and the ecclesiastical states, and that, if he refused, he must conduct him to General Miollis, who would assign him his ulterior place of destination. The Pope, without agitation, replied, that if the obligations of a soldier required of him such a duty, those of a pontiff imposed on him others still more sacred; that the Emperor might "cut him in pieces, but would never extract from him such a resignation, which he neither could, nor would, nor ought to subscribe." Radet then ordered him to prepare for immediate departure, intimating that Cardinal Pacea might accompany him on the journey. The pontiff immediately complied; and the French general having assured him that nothing in his palace should be violated, he said with a smile, "He who makes light of his life is not likely to be disquieted for the loss of his effects." Their preparations having been quickly made, the pontiff took his place in the carriage with Cardinal Pacea by his side, and, escorted by a powerful body of French cavalry, soon passed the Porta del Popolo, and emerged into the open and desert Campagna. "Cardinal," said the Pope, "we did well to publish the bull of excommunication on the 10th, or how could it have been done now?" At the first post-house he wished to give some charity to a poor person; but, upon inquiry of Cardinal Pacea, he found that between them they had only a papetto, or tenpence. He showed it smilingly to Radet saying, "Behold, general, all that we possess of our principality!"¹

¹ Pacea, l. 123, 129.
Radet, 12, 42. Arnaut, ii. 218, 220.

The Pope was conducted with all possible expedition by Radicofani and Sienna to Florence. During the journey, as nothing was prepared, the illustrious prisoners underwent great privations; and after nineteen hours of uninterrupted travelling, in the hottest weather, they reached the first of those towns, where a frugal repast and miserable bed awaited the Commander of the Faithful. At midnight on the following day they arrived at the Chartreuse of Florence. From thence their journey was continued more leisurely to Alexandria, which they reached on the 15th. More than once in the course of the journey, the Pope and his companion were obliged to exert their influence with the peasants to prevent a

77.
The Pope is conducted to Grenoble, and Cardinal Pacea to the castle of Fenestrelles.

CHAP.
LX.
1800.

forceful attempt at rescue, which the rural crowds, indignant at this scandalous treatment of the head of the Church, were preparing to make. Before leaving Rome, a well-conceived project had been secretly communicated to Pius VII. for delivering him from his oppressors, and securing his escape on board an English frigate, which was cruising for that purpose off Civita Vecchia : but he refused on any account to leave his post. At Florence he was separated from Cardinal Pacea, who was conducted by a separate route to Grenoble, and soon after, by a special order from Napoleon, transferred to the state prison of Fenestrelles in Savoy, where, amidst Alpine snows, he was confined to a dungeon a close prisoner till the beginning of 1813, when the Emperor, after the disasters of the Moscow campaign, finding it for his interest to conciliate the Pope, the cardinal was liberated, and joined his captive master at Fontainebleau. The Pope himself was hurried across the Alps by Mont Cenis ; but, as he approached France, the enthusiasm of the people redoubled ; insomuch that, when he reached Grenoble, his cortège had rather the appearance of a beloved sovereign who was returning to his dominions, than of a captive pontiff who was on his way to confinement in a foreign land. By a singular coincidence, the enfeebled remnant of the heroic garrison of Saragossa were at that period in Grenoble ; they hastened in crowds to meet their distressed Father, and, when his carriage appeared in sight, fell on their knees as one man, and received his earnest benediction. A captive pope inspired to these captive heroes a respect which they would never have felt for the mighty conqueror who had enthralled them both ! Such, in generous and uncorrupted minds, is the superiority religion confers to all the calamities of life.¹

July 21.

¹ Pacea, l.
167, 183.
Artaud, ii.
241, 245.

78.
Napoleon
approves of
the Pope's
seizure.

² Nap. in Las
Cases, v. 261.
Month. i. 130.

Napoleon has protested at St Helena, and apparently with truth, that he was not privy to the actual seizure of the Pope ; and that, when he first received the intelligence, he was at a loss what to do with his august captive.² But it required no argument to show, that neither Miollis nor Radet would have ventured on such a step unless they had been well assured that it was conformable, if not to the formal instructions, at least

to the secret wishes of the Emperor. And he soon gave convincing proof of this: "for as soon as he received advices of the event," says Savary, "*he approved of what had been done*, and stationed the Pope at Savona, revoking at the same time the gift of Charlemagne, and annexing the papal states to the French empire.* His Holiness remained at Savona for above three years, always under restraint and guarded, though not in prison. Napoleon, after the Moscow campaign, having received intelligence that a squadron of English frigates was cruising in the gulf of Lyons, with the design of facilitating his escape, had him removed to Fontainebleau, where he was detained a prisoner till the return of the Emperor from the disaster of Leipsic, when his necessities gave rise to important negotiations with the aged prisoner, which will form the subject of future consideration. Canova, who had been sent for to Paris by Napoleon, to model the colossal statue which is now to be seen on the staircase of Apsley House, interceded energetically in his behalf; but he could obtain no remission of the severe sentence; the Emperor alleging, as insurmountable charges against him, that "he was a German at heart, and had refused to banish the Russians and English." So tenaciously did he hold by his prey, that not even the horrors of the Russian retreat could make him relax it; he kept his captive firm during the campaign of Leipsic; and nothing but the crossing of the Rhine by the Allied armies, in spring 1814, procured the liberation of the unhappy pontiff.¹

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

June 9, 1813.

Jan. 23, 1814.

¹ Sav. iv. 131.

Artaud, ii.

285, 368

Nap. v. 261,

262. Bign.

viii. 286, 289.

The situation of the city of Rome was unquestionably improved by its transference from the drowsy sway of the Church to the energetic administration of Napoleon. Shortly after the annexation of the Roman states to the French dominions, it was declared the second city in the empire. To a deputation from Rome, which arrived at Paris soon after its incorporation with the French empire, Napoleon replied:—"My mind is full of the recollections of your ancestors. The first time that I

79.

Thorough
fusion of the
Roman states
with the
French em-
pire.

* "It is of little moment," says Thibaudeau, "whether Napoleon ordered the seizure of the Pope; he did not disapprove of it, he profited by it, and took upon himself its whole responsibility. His alleged discontent at Schenbrunn, when he received intelligence of the event, proves nothing; it might be part of his views to make it be believed it was done without his authority, and that he only assumed the scandal of the transaction because it was irreparable."—THIBAUDEAU, vii. 507.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

Dec. 12.

¹ Thib. vii.
512, 520.

80.
Prejudicial
effect of this
measure on
the indepen-
dence of the
Church.

pass the Alps, I desire to remain some time among you. The French emperors, my predecessors, had detached you from the territory of the empire ; but the good of my people no longer permits such a partition : France and Italy must be governed on the same system. You have need of a powerful hand to direct you. I shall have a singular pleasure in being your benefactor. Your bishop is the spiritual head of the Church, as I am its Emperor ; I 'render unto God the things that are God's, and unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.'” The official exposition of the state of the empire at the close of the year, portrayed in vivid colours the advantages which would arise from the government of all Italy under one system, and proclaimed the fixed determination of the Emperor never to infringe upon the spiritual authority, nor ever to permit again the temporal sovereignty, of the Church. In pursuance of these views, the Roman territory incorporated with the empire was speedily subjected to the whole regulations of the Imperial régime : the Code Napoleon, the conscription, the Continental System, were introduced in their full vigour ; préfets and sous-préfets were established, and the taxes, levied according to French principles, carried to the credit of the imperial budget.¹

Bossuet has assigned the reason, with his usual elevation of thought, why such a spoliation of all the possessions of the supreme pontiff, by a secular power, ever must be prejudicial to the best interests of religion. “God had chosen,” says he, “that the Church, the common mother of all nations, should be independent of all in its temporal affairs, and that the common centre to which all the faithful should look for the unity of their faith, should be placed in a situation above the partialities which the different interests and jealousies of states might occasion. The Church, independent in its head of all temporal powers, finds itself in a situation to exercise more freely, for the common good and protection of Christian kings, its celestial power of ruling the mind, when it holds in the right hand the balance even amidst so many empires, often in a state of hostility ; it maintains unity in all its parts, sometimes by inflexible decrees, sometimes by sage concessions.” The prin-

ciple which calls for the independence of the head of the Church from all temporal sovereignties, is the same which requires the emancipation of its subordinate ministers from the contributions of their flocks. Human nature in every rank is the same : the thralldom of vice and passion is felt alike in the cottage as on the throne. The subjection of the supreme pontiff to the direct control of France or Austria, is as fatal to his character and respectability as the control of the rural congregations is to the utility of the village pastor. Admitting that the court of Rome has not always shown itself free from tramontane influence, it has at least been less swayed than if it had had its residence at Vienna or Paris ; supposing that the conclave of the cardinals has often been swayed by selfish or ambitious views, it has been much less exposed to the effects of these than if it had been wholly dependent on external potentates for support. Equity in judgment, whether in temporal or spiritual matters, can never be attained except by such as are independent of those to whom the judgment is to be applied ; coercion of vice, whether in exalted or humble stations, can never be effected by those who depend upon that vice for their support ; the due direction of thought can never be given but by those who are not constrained to bend to the thoughts of others. It will ever be the great object of tyranny, whether regal or democratic, to beat down this central independent authority ; to render the censors of morals subservient to the dominant power ; and, under the specious pretence of emancipating mankind from spiritual shackles, in effect to subject them to a far more grievous temporal oppression.

But, whatever effects the dethronement and captivity of the Pope were likely to have produced, if they had continued long, on the independence and usefulness of the Church, the immediate effects of the change were in the highest degree beneficial to the city of Rome. Vast was the difference between the slumber of the cardinals and the energy of Napoleon. Improvements, interesting alike to the antiquary and the citizen, were undertaken in every direction. The majestic monuments of ancient Rome, half concealed by the ruins and accumulations of fourteen hundred years, stood

81.
Vast and admirable works undertaken by the French at Rome.

CHAP.
LX.

1809.

forth in renovated splendour. The stately columns of the temple of Jupiter Tonans, relieved of the load of their displaced architrave, were restored to the perpendicular from which they had swerved during their long decay; the beautiful pillars of that of Jupiter Stator, half covered up with fragments of marbles, revealed their exquisite and now fully discovered proportions. The huge interior of the Coliseum, cleared of the rubbish which obstructed its base, again exhibited its wonders to the light. The channels which conducted the water for the aquatic exhibitions, the iron gates which were opened to admit the hundreds of lions to the amphitheatre, the dens where their natural ferocity was augmented by artificial stimulants, the bronze rings to which the Christian martyrs were chained, again appeared to the wondering populace;* the houses which deformed the centre of the Forum were cleared away; and, piercing through a covering of eighteen feet in thickness, the labours of the workmen at length revealed the pavement of the ancient Forum, the venerable blocks of the Via Sacra, still furrowed by the chariot-wheel marks of a hundred triumphs. Similar excavations at the foot of the pillar of Trajan disclosed the graceful peristyle of columns with which it had been surrounded, and again exhibited fresh, after an interment of a thousand years, the delicate tints of its giallo-antico pillars and pavement. Nor were more distant quarters or modern interests neglected. The temple of Vesta, near the Tiber, was cleared out; a hundred workmen, under the direction of Canova, prosecuted their searches in the baths of Titus, where the Laocoon had been discovered; large sums were expended on the Quirinal palace, destined for the residence of the Imperial family when at Rome. Severe laws, and an impartial execution of them, speedily repressed the hideous practice of private assassination, so long the disgrace of the papal states;¹ a double

¹ Thib. viii.
429, 431.
Dign. ix. 382,
383. Bot. iv.
23. Personal
Observation.

* The interior of the Coliseum has been again filled up by the papal government, in order to facilitate access to the numerous chapels with which it is encircled; but the highly curious and interesting structures which were brought to light by the French excavations may be seen faithfully portrayed in several views of Rome, particularly one very interesting plate in Rossini's "*Anti-chite Romane*;" a work which, without the inimitable force and grandeur of Piranesi's, is incomparably more accurate, and gives the best idea of the Roman ruins which is any where to be met with.—*Personal Observation.*

row of shady trees led from the arch of Constantine to the Appian way, and thence to the Forum ; surveys were made with a view to the completion of the long neglected drainage of the Pontine marshes ; and preparations commenced for turning aside, for a season, the course of the Tiber, and discovering in its bed the inestimable treasures of art which were thrown into it during the terrors of the Gothic invasion.

CHAP.
LX.
1800.

The immutability of the Roman Catholic Church, amidst all these disasters, is not the least remarkable circumstance in this age of wonders. "Again doomed to death, the milk-white hind was still fated not to die. Even before the funeral rites had been performed over the ashes of Pius VI. a great reaction had commenced, which, after the lapse of more than forty years, appears to be still in progress. Anarchy had had its day : a new order of things had arisen out of the confusion—new dynasties, new laws, new titles ; and amidst them emerged the ancient religion. The Arabs have a fable that the great Pyramid was built by antediluvian kings, and alone of all the works of man bore the weight of the flood : such as this was the fate of the papacy. It had been buried under the great inundation, but its deep foundations had remained unshaken ; and, when the waters abated, it appeared alone amidst the ruins of a world which had passed away. The Republic of Holland was gone, and the Emperor of Germany, and the great Council of Venice, and the old Helvetic League, and the House of Bourbon, and the Parliaments and Aristocracy of France. Europe was full of young creations—a French Empire, a Kingdom of Italy, a Confederation of the Rhine. Nor had the late events affected only territorial limits and political institutions. The distribution of property, the composition and spirit of society, had, through great part of Catholic Europe, undergone a complete change. But the unchangeable Church was still there."¹

82.
Immutability
of the Roman
Catholic
Faith.

¹ Macaulay's
Essays, iii.
252.

"What does the Pope mean," said Napoleon to Eugene, in July 1807, "by the threat of excommunicating me ? Does he think the world has gone back a thousand years ? *Does he suppose the arms will fall from the hands of my soldiers ?*"* Within two years after these remarkable words were written, the Pope did excommunicate him, in

83.
Reflections
on the spoliation
of the
Pope, as connected
with
Napoleon's
subsequent
reverses.

* *Ante*, Chap. lx. § 69, note.

CHAP.

LX.

1809.

return for the confiscation of his whole dominions ; and in less than four years more, the arms *did fall from the hands of his soldiers* ;* and the hosts, apparently invincible, which he had collected, were dispersed and ruined by the blasts of winter. He extorted from the supreme pontiff at Fontainebleau, in 1813, after the terrors and exhaustion of a long captivity, a renunciation of the rights of the church over the Roman states ; and within a year after, he himself was compelled, at Fontainebleau, to sign the abdication of all his dominions. He consigned Cardinal Pacca, and several other prelates, the courageous counsellors of the bull of excommunication, to a dreary imprisonment of four years amidst the snows of the Alps ; and he himself was shortly after doomed to a painful exile of six on the rock of St Helena !¹ There is something in these marvellous coincidences beyond the operations of chance, and which even a Protestant historian feels himself bound to mark for the observation of future ages. The world had not gone back a thousand years, but that Being existed with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. And without ascribing these events to any deviation from ordinary laws, or supposing that the common Father, "who sees with equal eye, as Lord of all," the varied modes of worship of his different creatures, had interposed in a peculiar manner in favour of any particular church, we may, without presumption, rest in the humble belief, that the laws of the moral world are of universal application ; that there are limits to the oppression of virtue even in this scene of trial : and that, when a power, elevated on the ascendancy of passion and crime, has gone such a length as to outrage alike the principles of justice and the religious feelings of a whole quarter of the globe, the period is not far distant when the aroused indignation of mankind will bring about its punishment.

¹ Pacca, i.
283.

* "The weapons of the soldiers," says Segur, in describing the Russian retreat, "appeared of an insupportable weight to their stiffened arms. During their frequent falls, they fell from their hands ; and, destitute of the power of raising them from the ground, they were left in the snow. They did not throw them away ; famine and cold tore them from their grasp. The fingers of many were frozen on the muskets which they yet carried, and their hands deprived of the circulation necessary to sustain the weight."—SEGUR, ii. 182.

"The soldiers could no longer hold their weapons ; they fell from the hands even of the bravest and most robust.—The muskets dropped from the frozen arms of those who bore them."—SALGUES, *Mémoires pour Générale Histoire de France sous Napoléon*, vol. x. chap. 5.

CHAPTER LXI.

MARITIME WAR, AND CAMPAIGN OF 1809 IN ARAGON AND CATALONIA.

ALTHOUGH the military power of France and England had never been fairly brought into collision since the commencement of the contest, and both the government and the nation of Great Britain were, to a degree which is now almost inconceivable, ignorant alike of the principles of war with land troops, and the magnitude of the resources for such a conflict which were at their disposal; yet the forces of the contending parties, when a battle-field was at last found, were in reality much more equally balanced than was commonly imagined. France, indeed, had conquered all the states of continental Europe, and her armies were surrounded with a halo of success which rendered them invincible to the hostility of present power. But England and she were ancient rivals, and the lustre of former renown shone, dimly indeed, but perceptibly, through the darkness of present humiliation. It was in vain that the conquest of all the armies, and the capture of almost all the capitals of Europe was referred to by their old antagonists; the English rested on the battles of Cressy and Azincourt, and calmly pointed to the imperishable inheritance of historic glory. Their soldiers, their citizens, were alike penetrated with these recollections; the belief of the natural superiority of the English to the French, in a fair field, was impressed on the humblest sentinel of the army; the exploits of the Edwards and the Henrys of ancient times, burned in the hearts of the officers and animated the spirit of the people. The universal arming of all classes,

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

I.

Comparative
military
power of
France and
England at
this period.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

under the danger of Napoleon's invasion, had spread, to an extent of which the Continental nations were wholly unaware, the military spirit throughout the realm ; while the recent campaigns of the army in India had trained a number of officers to daring exploits, habituated them to the difficulties of actual service, and roused again, in the ranks of the privates, that confidence in themselves which is the surest forerunner of victory. The French journals spoke contemptuously of the British conquests in the East, and anxiously invoked the time when "this general of sepoys" should measure his strength with the marshals of the empire. But this feeling of security, as is generally the case when not derived from experience, was founded on ignorance : the chief who had fronted the dangers of Assaye, was not likely to quail before the terrors of more equal encounter ; and the men who had mounted the breach of Seringapatam, or faced the cannonade of Laswaree, had no reason to distrust themselves in the most perilous fields of European warfare.

2.
Noble spirit
which pre-
valled at this
time in the
British diplo-
matic engage-
ments.
Rejection of
the proposals
from Erfurth.
Oct. 12, 1808.

If the occasional faulty direction of the national resources when the land contest began, and, above all, the total ignorance of the value of time in war which universally prevailed, frequently led the British forces into disaster, and rendered abortive their greatest enterprises ; the firmness with which the struggle was still persevered in by the government and people, the noble spirit which dictated their national engagements, are worthy of the very highest admiration. Shortly after the Peninsular war broke out, and when it was still rather a tumultuary insurrection than a regular warfare, proposals of peace were addressed by Alexander and Napoleon, from their place of conference at Erfurth. The basis of this proposition was the principle of *uti possidetis*, and it received additional lustre from being signed by both these illustrious potentates, and acknowledging the very principles for which Great Britain herself had formerly contended. In answer to this communication, Mr Canning, the British minister for foreign affairs, stated, he would hasten to communicate to his allies, the King of Sweden, and the *existing government of Spain*, the proposals which have been made to him. "Your Excellency will perceive that it is absolutely necessary that his Majesty should receive an

Oct. 22.

immediate assurance that France acknowledges the government of Spain as party to any negotiation. With Portugal and Sweden, Great Britain has long had the closest ties ; the interests of Sicily are confided to his care ; and though he is not as yet bound to Spain by any formal instrument, he has, in the face of the world, contracted engagements not less binding and sacred than the most solemn treaties." To this it was replied by Russia and France, that "they had no difficulty in at once admitting the sovereigns in alliance with England to a congress, but that they could not admit the Spanish insurgents. The Russian empire has always acted on this principle ; and its Emperor is now, in an especial manner, called to adhere to it, as he has already acknowledged Joseph Buonaparte King of Spain."* This answer broke off the negotiation, and the King of England soon after issued a declaration, in which he announced the rupture of the correspondence, and lamented the adherence of the allied sovereigns to the determination not to treat with the Spanish nation, as the cause of its failure.¹

CHAP.

LXI.

1809.

Dec. 15, 1808.

1 Parl. Deb.

xii. 93, 105.

The gallant determination thus expressed by the British government, to admit of no conferences to which the Spanish nation was not admitted as a party, was soon after put to a still more serious trial. Negotiations had for some time been pending for the conclusion of a treaty of alliance between England and the Spanish government, which had been commenced as soon as the formation of the Central Junta offered any responsible party with whom such an engagement could be formed ; and they were persisted in with unshaken constancy by the British cabinet, notwithstanding all the disasters which in the close of the campaign had befallen the Spanish armies, and the capture of their capital by the forces of Napoleon. At length, on the 14th of January, Mr Canning had the satisfaction of signing a treaty of peace and alliance between the two states, by which it was stipulated that the "King of England shall assist to the utmost of his power the Spanish nation in their struggle against the tyranny and usurpation of France, and promises not to acknowledge any King of Spain and the Indies than Ferdi-

3.
Treaty offensive and defensive between England and Spain.

Jan. 14, 1809.

* See Appendix, A, Chap. Ixi.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

nand VII., his heirs, or such lawful successors as the Spanish nation shall acknowledge ; and the Spanish government engages never, in any case, to cede to France any part of the territories or possessions of the Spanish monarchy in any part of the world ; and both the high contracting parties agree to make common cause against France, and not to make peace except by common consent." When it is recollected, that this treaty was concluded after the Spanish armies had been utterly routed and dispersed by the overwhelming forces of Napoleon, when their capital was taken, more than half their provinces overrun, and on the very day when the British forces embarked at Corunna, after their disastrous retreat from Leon, it must be admitted that the annals of the world do not afford a more sublime example of constancy in adversity and heroic fidelity to engagements on the part of both the contracting parties.¹

¹ See the treaty in Parl. Deb. xlii. 810, 811 ; and Martin's Sup. v. 163.

4.
And with Sweden.
Feb. 8, 1809.

Faithful alike to its least as its most considerable allies, the British government at this period concluded a new treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Swedish nation, now exposed to the most serious peril from the invasion of their formidable neighbour ; and threatened alike in Finland and on the Baltic by an overwhelming force. Shortly after the treaty of Tilsit, and when this danger from Russia was foreseen, a convention was concluded with the court of Stockholm, by which Great Britain and Sweden mutually engaged to conclude no separate peace, and the former power was to pay an annual subsidy of £1,200,000 to the latter : and this agreement was confirmed by an additional convention concluded at Stockholm a year after, by which it was agreed that the subsidy should be paid quarterly, and in advance.² But the pressure of external events prevented the latter treaty from being long acted on, and produced a change of dynasty in the Scandinavian peninsula, fraught with important consequences upon the general interests of Europe, which will be the subject of interesting narrative in a future chapter.*

March 1,
1809.
² Martin's
Sup. v. 2, 9.

Another treaty, attended with important consequences, both present and future, was about the same time con-

* *Infra*, Chap. lxx.

tracted between Great Britain and the Ottoman Porte. Since the conclusion of the peace of Tilsit, which delivered over Napoleon's ally, Turkey, to the tender mercies of Russia, only stipulating the lion's share for the French empire, and the consequent commencement of a bloody war on the Danube between the two powers, which will hereafter be considered,* there was, in reality, no cause of hostility between England and the court of Constantinople. They were both at war with Russia, and both the objects of enmity to France; they were naturally, therefore, friends to each other. Impressed with these ideas, the British cabinet made advances to the Divan, representing the mutual advantage of an immediate cessation of hostilities; and so completely had the treachery of France at Tilsit obliterated the irritation produced by Sir John Duckworth's expedition, and undermined the influence of Sebastiani at Constantinople, that they met with the most favourable reception. A treaty of peace was, in consequence, concluded between England and Turkey, in the beginning of January, at Constantinople, which, relieving the Grand Seignior from all apprehension in his rear, or from the maritime power of Russia, enabled him to direct his whole force to the desperate contest on the Danube.¹

Nor was this treaty of less importance eventually to Great Britain. By re-establishing the relations of amity and commerce with a vast empire, bordering, along so extensive a frontier, the eastern states of Christendom, it opened a huge inlet for British manufactures and colonial produce, which was immediately and largely taken advantage of. Bales of goods, infinitely beyond the wants or consumption of the Ottoman empire, were shipped for Turkey, transported up the Danube, across the barrier of Hungary and the Albanian hills, and finding their way, carried on mules and men's heads, over the mountain frontier of Transylvania, penetrated through all Hungary and the Austrian empire. Thus while Napoleon, intent on the Continental System, which absolutely required for its success the formation of all Europe into one league for the exclusion of British merchandise, flattered himself that by the treaty of

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

5.
Treaty
between
Great Britain
and Turkey.
Jan. 5, 1809.

¹ Martin's
Sup. v. 160.
Ann. Reg.
1809, 134.
State Papers.

6.
Extension to
which it led
of British
Continental
commerce.

* *Infra*, Chap. lxi.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

¹ See the
treaty in
Martin's
Sup. v. 160.
Ann. Reg.
1809, 134.
State Papers.

Tilsit he had effectually attained that object, he had already, in the consequences of that very triumph, awakened a resistance which in a great degree defeated it; and in the aroused hostility of the Spanish peninsula and Turkey, severally delivered up to his own and Alexander's ambition by that pacification, had amply compensated Great Britain for the commercial advantage she had lost in northern Europe.¹

7.
Desponding
views on the
Peninsular
contest which
generally
prevailed in
Great
Britain.

But, although the constancy and resolution of the British government at this crisis was worthy of the noble cause which they were called upon to support, it was not without great difficulty that they succeeded in prevailing upon parliament and the people to second their efforts. The dispersion of the Spanish armies, the fall of Madrid, and the calamitous issue of Sir John Moore's retreat, had conspired in an extraordinary degree to agitate and distract the public mind. To the unanimous burst of enthusiasm which had followed the outbreak of the Spanish insurrection, and the extraordinary successes with which it was at first attended, had succeeded a depression proportionally unreasonable. The populace, incapable of steady perseverance, and ever ready to rush from one extreme to another, now condemned government, in no measured strains, for pursuing that very line of conduct, which, a few months before, had been the object of their warmest eulogy and most strenuous support. The insanity of attempting to resist the French power by land; the madness of expecting any thing like durable support from popular insurrection; the impossibility of opposing any effectual barrier to Napoleon's continental dominion; his vast abilities, daring energy, and unbounded resources, were loudly proclaimed by the Opposition party. A large portion of the press adopted the same views, and augmented the general consternation by the most gloomy predictions. To such a height did the excitement arise, that it required all the firmness of ministers, supported by the constancy of the aristocratic party, to stem the torrent, and prevent the British troops from being entirely withdrawn from the Peninsula, and the Spanish war utterly extinguished by its first serious reverses.²

² Ann. Reg.
1809, 26, 29.
South. Pen.
War, ii. 328,
331.

The debates in parliament on this, as on every other

occasion, exhibited a faithful picture of the sentiments entertained by the people ; and are interesting not merely as indicating the views adopted by the leaders of the opposite parties, but as affording a true image of the opinions by which the nation itself was divided. On the side of the Opposition, it was strongly argued by Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, Mr Ponsonby, and Mr Whitbread, "That experience had now proved, what might from the first have been anticipated, that the Peninsula was not a theatre on which the British forces could ever be employed with advantage ; with the Pyrenees unlocked, and the road between Paris and Madrid as open as between Paris and Antwerp, nothing could justify our sending thirty or forty thousand men into the interior of Spain to combat two hundred thousand. Such a measure can only be compared to the far-famed march to Paris, to which it is fully equal in wildness and absurdity.* It is clear it must rest with the Spaniards themselves to work out their own independence, and that without that spirit no army that we can send can be of any avail. The cautious defensive system of warfare which the Spanish juntas originally recommended has been abandoned, from the delusive hopes inspired by the regular armies we chose to send them, and defeat and ruin have been the consequence. As if to make a mockery of our assistance, we have sent our succours to the farthest possible point from the scene of action, and made our depot at Lisbon, where the French must have been cut off and surrendered, if we had not kindly furnished them with the means of transport to France, from whence they might be moved by the enemy to the quarter most servicable for his projects.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

8.
Arguments
of the Oppo-
sition against
the Spanish
war.

* Lord Grenville here alluded to an expression of Lord Liverpool's, then Mr Jenkinson, in 1793, that the Allied army, after the fall of Valenciennes, should march direct to Paris. This saying was, for twenty years afterwards, the subject of constant ridicule by the Opposition party, and it was set down by general consent as one of the most absurd ebullitions that ever came from the mouth of man. Yet it is now admitted by Napoleon, and all the French military historians, that the observation was perfectly just, and that, if the Allies had held together and pressed on after that event, they would have taken the French capital and terminated the war in that campaign. A parallel case, in domestic transactions, is to be found in Lord Castlereagh's celebrated saying regarding "the ignorant impatience of taxation," which nevertheless it is now plain was entirely well founded, as but for it the national debt would now have been entirely paid off, or reduced to a mere trifle. No fallacious a guide is public opinion, when not formed at a distance from the event, and with the benefit of the light which subsequent experience, calm discussion, and superior intellects, have thrown on the question.—See *Anti*, Chap. xlii. § 40; and Chap. xlii. § 24.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

9.
Alleged
absence of the
means of con-
tinued resis-
tance in
Spain.

"When the Spanish insurrection broke out, and the world looked on in anxious suspense on that great event, ministers took none of the steps necessary to enable parliament to judge of the measures which should be pursued. In the generous enthusiasm, the confidence and prodigality of the nation outstripped even the most sanguine wishes of ministers; men, money, transports, stores, all were put with boundless profusion at their disposal. How have they justified that confidence? Is it not clear that it has been misplaced? It was evident to every one that our whole disposable military force could not hope to cope single-handed against the immense armies of Napoleon; and therefore it was their bounden duty, before they hazarded any portion of our troops in the cause, to be well assured that the materials of an efficient and lasting hostility existed in the country. It was not sufficient to know, that monks could excite some of the poorer classes to insurrection, and that, when so excited, they evinced for a time great enthusiasm. The real question was, were they animated with that general resolution from which alone national efforts could flow; and was it guided and directed by those influential classes, from whose exertion alone any thing like steadiness and perseverance could be anticipated? No proper inquiry was made into these subjects. From the agents whom ministers sent out, they got nothing but false or exaggerated information, more likely to mislead than to enlighten; and the consequence has been, that immense stores were thrown away or fell into the enemy's hands, vast subsidies were squandered or embezzled, and the entire fabric of delusion and misrepresentation fell before the first shock of the imperial forces.

10.
And errors
into which
Sir John
Moore had
been led by
Mr Frere.

"In the direction of our own troops, mismanagement was, if possible, still more flagrant. Mr Frere was obviously not a proper person to be sent to Madrid to report as to the prudence or chances of success of Sir John Moore's advance into Spain: a military man should have been there, qualified to judge of the real state of the Spanish armies, and not expose the flower of the British troops to destruction, from crediting the rodomontade of proclamations, and the representations of interested supporters. When Sir John did arrive in Spain, in the middle of December, he came in time only to be the last

devoured: all the Spanish armies had been dissipated before the British fired a shot. After Napoleon had arrived at Madrid, the retreat previously and wisely ordered by the English general was suspended, and a forward movement, fraught with the most calamitous results, commenced. By what influence or representations was that most disastrous change of measures brought about? That was the point into which it behoved parliament to inquire, for there was the root of all the subsequent misfortunes. Mr Frere's despatches at that time urged him to advance, representing the great strength of the insurrection in the south of Spain; and that, if he would attack the enemy in the north, the Spanish cause, then almost desperate, would have time to revive. Incalculable were the calamities consequent on that most absurd advice; for such were the dangers into which it led the British army, that within a few days afterwards, Sir John Moore was obliged to resume his retreat, and if he had not done so, in twenty-four hours more that army would have been surrounded and destroyed. What has been the result of all this imbecility? A shameful and disastrous retreat, which will influence the character of England long after all of us shall have ceased to live. We never can expect to be able to meet the four or five hundred thousand men whom Buonaparte can pour into Spain: when the opportunity was lost of seizing the passes of the Pyrenees, and the Peninsula was inundated with his troops, success had become hopeless, and the struggle should never have been attempted."¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
xii. 12, 21,
and 1073.

On the other hand, it was contended by Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr Canning: "The question now is, whether we are to record a public avowal of a determination not to desert the cause and the government to which we are pledged, and profess ourselves undismayed by the reverses we have sustained in that cause, which those very reverses had rendered it a more sacred duty to support. Those who inferred that the cause was desperate on account of these reverses, were little acquainted with history, and least of all with Spanish history. There it would be found, that nations, overrun just as completely as the Spaniards had been, had continued the contest for ten or twenty years; and though constantly worsted in

11.
Answer of
the Ministers
in support of
the Span-
iards.

CHAP.
LXI.

1800.

12.
Great suc-
cesses already
achieved.

regular battles, had still, by perseverance and resolution, in the end proved triumphant. The cause in which they were engaged was the most interesting to humanity ; it was a struggle for their liberty, their independence, and their religion ; for the homes of their fathers and the cradles of their descendants. Is nothing to be risked in support of so generous an ally ? Is England, so renowned in history for her valour and perseverance, to be disheartened by the first reverse, and yield the palm to her ancient rivals, whom she has so often conquered even in their own territory, merely because she was unable to withstand forces quadruple her own armies ?

“ It is a mistake, however, to assert that we have sustained nothing but disasters in the campaign. Was the conquest of Portugal ;, the capture of all its fortresses, arsenals, and resources ; the defeat and capitulation of one of the best armies and ablest marshals of France, nothing for our first essay in continental warfare ? When we advanced into Spain, it was to act only as an auxiliary force ; such was the express and earnest request of the Spaniards themselves, and it was the part which befitted the allies of so considerable and renowned a nation to take. Spain had made an energetic effort ; she had combated with a spirit and constancy which had not distinguished greater empires and more extensive resources ; she had gained triumphs which might put northern Europe to the blush ; and, if she had been unable to stand the first brunt of a power before which all the military monarchies of the Continent had sunk, it was ungenerous to reproach her with her reverses in the hour of her misfortune, unmanly to be discouraged because important victories have been followed by what may yet prove only passing clouds. It is in vain to attempt to disparage the efforts of the Spanish army and nation. Those are not despicable victories which, for the first time since the French Revolution broke out, had arrested the course of its champion's triumphs, and made the conquerors of northern Europe pass under the Caudine forks : those were not contemptible national exertions which drove a French army of a hundred thousand men behind the Ebro, and brought Napoleon with two hundred thousand more from the other side of the Rhine.

"Nothing can be more erroneous than the opinion which has become general since the late reverses, that the Spaniards cannot, under any circumstances, require our assistance; that if they are in earnest in the great object of their deliverance, they must work it out for themselves, and have the means of doing so without the aid of British soldiers; and that, if they are indifferent to their salvation, no succour of ours can achieve it for them. Such a proposition sounds well, and might perhaps be founded in truth, if Spain had a regular army to support and form a nucleus for the efforts of her enthusiastic peasantry. But all history demonstrates, that the resistance of no people, however resolute, is to be relied on for success in a protracted warfare, if they are entirely deprived of the support and example of regular armies. It is the combination of the two which makes a nation invincible. Spain has the one, but not the other; it is for England, so far as her resources will go, to supply the deficiency, and ingraft on the energetic efforts of newly-raised forces the coolness and intrepidity of her incomparable soldiers. Unless such a nucleus of resistance remains in the Peninsula to occupy the French armies in one quarter, while organisation is going on in another, no efficient resistance can be expected, because the patriot armies will be reached and dispersed, in every province, before they have acquired any degree of efficiency. How has every English patriot mourned the neglect of the fairest opportunity that ever occurred of combating the forces of the Revolution, by leaving the heroic Vendéans to perish under the merciless sword of the Republic! Taught by past error, let us not repeat it, now that resistance of the same description has arisen on a much greater scale, and under circumstances offering a much fairer prospect of success.

"The advance of Sir John Moore to Sahagun was neither undertaken solely on his own responsibility, nor solely on the advice of Mr Frere: he had previously, from intercepted despatches from Berthier to Soult, ascertained that he would be on the Carrion on a certain day, and knew from thence that an opportunity was afforded of striking an important blow against that general when unsupported by the other French corps. About the same time advices arrived from Mr Frere,

CHAP.

LXI.

1809.

13.

Absolute
necessity to
Spain of ex-
ternal aid.

14.

Defence of
Sir John
Moore's
advance.

CHAP.
LXI.
1800.

painting in the warmest colours the resolution of the people of Madrid to emulate the example of Saragossa, and bury themselves under the ruins of the capital rather than surrender it to the French arms. Such were the concurring reasons which prompted the forward movement of the British general; and would not that general be unworthy of commanding British soldiers who could hesitate, under such circumstances, to advance to the support of his allies? On this occasion, the inestimable importance of our regular troops in the war was distinctly shown. This well-conceived invasion, though effected only by twenty-five thousand men, by menacing the enemy's line of communication, paralysed the whole hostile armies of Spain; stopped at once the progress of the French corps both towards Andalusia and Portugal; gave the troops and inhabitants of these countries time to prepare for their defence, and drew Napoleon himself, with seventy thousand of his best men, into a remote corner of Spain. But for this seasonable advance, but for our assistance, the war would have been terminated in the first consternation consequent on the fall of Madrid.

15.
The evacuation of the country had been done at the instance of Sir David Baird. Result of the debate.

"The sending out transports and bringing the troops home, was not the work of government: it was the consequence of a distinct requisition from Sir David Baird that he required them; thirteen thousand men were relanded after being shipped, in consequence of that demand, and the transports, to the infinite grief of government, were sent out empty. But the cause of Spain was not yet desperate; and it was neither just to that country nor our own army, which, it was to be hoped, would yet prove the stay of Europe, to assert that its honour was gone for ever. All the energy of liberty, all the sacredness of loyalty, still survived; and the Spanish revolution might yet be destined by Providence to stand between posterity and French despotism, and to show to the world that amidst the paroxysms of freedom a monarch might still be loved. If we had been obliged to leave Spain, we had left it with fresh laurels blooming upon our brows; more honourable in the sight of God and man, because more purely won, than if gained in the richest field of self-aggrandisement, or amidst the securest

triumphs of selfish ambition." These generous sentiments, addressed to an assembly in a large proportion of whom the chivalrous feelings yet glowed, and who had recently caught the flame of patriotic ardour from the early glories of the Spanish war, proved triumphant with a great majority of the House; and Mr Ponsonby's motion for a committee to inquire into the conduct of the campaign in Spain, was negatived by a majority of 93—the numbers being 127 to 220.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1800.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xii. 22, 23,
and 1075,
1104.

These debates, though they by no means assuaged the public excitement after the calamitous issue of the campaign, had at least one good effect,—that of demonstrating where it was that the real fault lay, and what should now be done to repair it. Nothing could be clearer, when the question was sifted to the bottom, than that the advance of Sir John Moore had been an able and well-judged step; that his subsequent retreat was alike necessary and expedient; that the withdrawing Napoleon's Guards from Madrid, and leading Ney and Soult to Corunna, had saved the southern provinces and the cause of Spanish independence; and that, if there was any fault in its direction, it was in the unnecessary haste with which the retreat had been conducted—a venial error, the consequence of inexperienced troops and a long-established despondency, on military affairs, in the public mind. The real error lay in abandoning the Peninsula, if Corunna was no longer tenable, and steering with the transports for England, instead of making for Lisbon or Cadiz. Disorganised as the army was by the sufferings of the retreat, it would soon have recovered its efficiency in the quiet of the Portuguese capital; the immense stores sent out by England would have speedily replaced its equipment and restored its *matériel*; a sense of security, the arrival of reinforcements from home, would ere long have revived its spirit. The French marshals would have had little to boast of, if, after the whole Peninsular war had been paralysed for its destruction, and two of their corps had been drawn to the extremity of Galicia in its pursuit, the English army had reappeared, a few days after, at the rock of Lisbon; and, from a still more formidable central position, threatened in flank their wearied and harassed troops, scattered from the Asturian mountains to the Sierra Morena.

16.
Light which
these debates
threw on the
real errors of
the cam-
paign.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

17.

The govern-
ment resolve
to support the
Spanish war,
and Sir A.
Wellesley is
sent out to
Lisbon.

Impressed with these ideas, the English government, after a temporary hesitation till the decision of parliament on the subject was known, took the magnanimous and fortunate resolution still to persevere in a land contest in the Peninsula, and to send out considerable reinforcements to Portugal. The troops, thirteen thousand strong, which had been prepared to reinforce Sir John Moore, were accordingly retained in the seaports to which they had been directed, and in the beginning of April sailed for Lisbon. The command of the expedition was given to Sir Arthur Wellesley, whom his great achievements in India, as well as his recent unclouded triumph in Portugal, clearly pointed out for that arduous duty. So shaken were the minds of all, however, by the recent Peninsular disasters, and so uncertain was even government of the state of Portugal, that his instructions directed him, if, on his arrival at Lisbon, he found that capital evacuated by the British troops, to make for Cadiz. This calamitous event, fortunately, did not take place: the standard of independence still waved in the Tagus; courageous efforts had been made during the winter in Portugal; and on the 22d April Sir Arthur landed, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, at Lisbon, and commenced that career which has rendered his own name and that of his country immortal. He never re-embarked there again to steer for Britain: the days were passed when the English looked for safety to their ships: when next he set sail for England, it was from Calais with his cavalry, which had marched thither in triumph from Bayonne.¹

April 22.

¹ Gurw. iv.
246. Soult,
ii. 388.

18.

Measures to
increase the
land forces.
March 6.

To provide for the war on the gigantic scale on which during this year it was to be conducted, at once in Flanders, Austria, and Portugal, large supplies of men and money were requisite; and the attention of government was early and anxiously directed to these vital objects. It had long been perceived that the true nursery for the British army was the militia, which, being raised by ballot for home service only, did not excite the jealousy of a people too much attached to their liberties to submit, save in the last necessity, to conscription for the regular army. A bill, accordingly, was brought in by Lord Castlereagh, which soon received the

assent of the legislature, which provided for raising twenty-four thousand men for the militia, by bounties of ten guineas each; and, if that temptation proved insufficient, by ballot; in order to replace an equal number who had volunteered from that service into the line. This measure proved entirely successful. The bounty for enlisting into the regular army was at the same time raised to twelve guineas; and from that time till the close of the war no difficulty was experienced in raising the requisite number of men, without any forced levy, for both services—even to supply the vast consumption of the Peninsular war—so strongly was the spirit of the nation now roused against the usurpations of France, and so widely had the military spirit spread with the general arming of the people which followed the threats of Napoleon's invasion.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

The raising of supplies for a year, when operations were contemplated on a scale of such magnitude, presented difficulties of no ordinary kind; but they were surmounted without any extraordinary addition to the burdens of the people. The war expenditure amounted to £53,000,000; the ways and means, including a loan of £11,000,000, being somewhat more. The total expenditure of this year, including the interest of the debt and sinking fund, was £89,522,000, while the total income was £90,525,000. The regular army amounted to 210,000 men, exclusive of 80,000 militia; of whom 100,000 were disposable in the British islands; and the navy, manned by 130,000 seamen, numbered no less than 1061 ships of war, of which 698 were in commission, 242 were of the line, besides 42 building, and 113 of that class were actually at sea. These numbers deserve to be noted, as marking the highest point to which the British navy had yet reached in that or any other war; and indicate an amount of naval force far superior to that of all other nations put together, and to which the world never had, and perhaps never will see, a parallel.²*

19.
Budget, and
naval and
military
forces of
Britain.

² Ann. Reg.
1809, 81.
James' Naval
Hist. iv. 404,
Table 17.
Parl. Deb.
xiv. 531.
Porter's
Parl. Tables,
i. p. 1.

The first great success which occurred to elevate the hopes of the British after the disasters of the Peninsular campaign, occurred at sea. A squadron of eight sail of the line and two frigates, under Admiral Villamez, had

* See Appendix, B, Chap. lxi.

CHAP.
LXI.

1800.

20.

French expedition sails from Brest for Basque Roads.

Feb. 21.

March 28.

¹ James's Naval Hist. iv. 94, 110. Brenton, ii. 277, 279. Thib. vii. 260.

21.

Position of the French in Basque Roads. An attack with fireships is resolved on.

for some time been watching for an opportunity to elude the vigilance of the British cruisers and escape from Brest, in order to gain a general rendezvous assigned them by the French government in **BASQUE ROADS**. The object of this movement was to chase the British blockading squadron from before L'Orient; liberate the ships there, which consisted of three sail of the line and five frigates; and, with the united force of eleven line-of-battle ships and seven frigates, make for Martinique, now threatened by a British expedition, and for the relief of which the squadron had several thousand land troops on board. On the 21st February they effected their object of sailing from Brest, immediately steered for the south, and after some difficulty, owing to the narrow channels and shoal-waters round the Isle d'Aix, the desired junction was effected, and Villaumez found himself at the head of eleven ships of the line and seven frigates in Basque Roads. Thither he was immediately followed by the British squadron under Lord Gambier, which being joined to the blockading force off L'Orient, amounted to eleven sail of the line. Alarmed by the approach of so formidable a fleet, the French vessels weighed anchor, and stood for the inner and more protected roads of the Isle d'Aix. In performing this operation, one of their line-of-battle ships, the *Jean Bart*, went ashore and was lost. The British admiral immediately followed, and anchored in Basque Roads, directly opposite to the enemy, with his frigates and smaller vessels in advance; and as the close proximity of the hostile fleets, and their confined anchorage, rendered them in a peculiar manner exposed to attack by fireships, extraordinary precautions were adopted on both sides against that much dreaded mode of assault.¹

The French fleet was now anchored in a very strong position. On one side they were covered by the Isle d'Aix, garrisoned by two thousand men, and batteries mounting thirty long thirty-six pounders and several mortars; while, on the other, the isle of Oleron, at the distance of three miles and a half, was fortified by several works, the guns of which nearly reached the range of those of the citadel of Aix. Shoals also abounded in all directions; and the French fleet was drawn up in two close

lines, between the protecting forts near the shore, in a situation not unlike that of Brueys at the Nile, with this difference, that the vessels in the second line were placed opposite the openings in the first, as at Trafalgar. As any regular action with the fleet seemed hazardous in such a situation, Lord Gambier suggested an attack by means of fireships, in which the admiralty readily concurred. Twelve fireships were immediately prepared with extraordinary expedition in the English harbours; and, as most of the officers consulted gave it as their opinion that the undertaking would be attended with great hazard, the execution of it was intrusted to LORD COCHRANE, who considered it as attended with little difficulty, and whose cool intrepidity and inexhaustible resources, long demonstrated in a partisan warfare on the coasts of France and Spain, pointed him out as peculiarly qualified for the important enterprise. He at first declined, from delicacy to the officers already in the fleet; but, being pressed by government, accepted the command, and in the beginning of April joined the fleet in Basque Roads, whither he was immediately afterwards followed by the Mediator frigate, and twelve other vessels armed as fireships.¹

The preparations being at length completed, the different frigates and smaller vessels moved to the stations assigned to them; and, on the evening of the 11th April, advanced to their perilous service. The enemy being aware, from the arrival of the fireships, of what was intended, had made every preparation for repelling the attack. A strong boom had been drawn across the line of their fleet, at the distance of 110 yards, composed of cables and chains twisted together, and secured by anchors at either end, of the enormous weight of five tons each; while the whole boats of the fleet, seventy-three in number, were assembled near the boom, in five divisions, for the purpose of boarding and towing away the fireships. The line-of-battle ships lay behind, with their top-masts on deck, and every imaginable precaution taken to avert the dreadful fate which menaced them. Nothing, however, could resist the daring of the British sailors, and the admirable skill of the officers in direction of the fireships. The wind, which was strong, and blew

CHAP.
LXI.
1799.

1 James, iv.
102, 103.
Brenton, ii.
278, 279.

22.
Preparations
for the attack
on the enemy
in Basque
Roads.
April 14.

CHAP.
LXI.

1819.

1 James, iv.
106, 107.
Lord Gam-
bler's Desp.
14th April
1809. Ann.
Reg. 1809,
443. App. to
Chron. Bren-
ton, II. 280.

right in upon shore was as favourable as possible ; and under its blast the fireships got under weigh, and bore down swiftly on the enemy's line, while the sailors in both fleets strained their anxious eyes to discern the dark masses as they silently glided through the gloom. Lord Cochrane directed the leading vessel, which had fifteen hundred barrels of powder and four hundred shells on board ; while the Mediator, under the able direction of Captain Woolridge, filled with as many combustibles, immediately followed. The admirable direction given the latter vessel, by its heroic commander, brought it down direct against the boom ; and the whole fireships, which rapidly followed, made straight towards the enemy's fleet, amidst a heavy fire from the batteries on both sides, and the line in front. Dauntless indeed was the intrepidity of the crews, who, during the darkness of a tempestuous night, steered vessels charged to the brim with gunpowder and the most combustible materials, right into the middle of a concentric fire of bombs and projectiles, any one of which might in an instant have blown them into the air.¹

23.
Dreadful noc-
turnal attack,
and destruc-
tion of the
French fleet.

During the gloom of that stormy night, however, it was impossible even for the greatest skill and coolness to steer the fireships precisely to the points assigned to them. The wind was lulled by the effect of the first explosions, and the consequence was, that many of them blew up at such a distance from the enemy's line as to do little or no damage. So resolute, however, were the captain and crew of the Mediator to discharge the duty assigned to them, that, after breaking the boom and setting fire to their vessel, they still held by her till she was almost in the enemy's fleet, and were blown out of the ship when she exploded, severely, though happily not mortally scorched. Lord Cochrane's vessel, which led the way, though directed by that gallant officer with the most consummate skill and courage, was unable to break the boom till the Mediator came up, when it gave way. A minute thus lost caused her to explode a hundred yards too soon, and without any damage to the enemy. No sooner, however, was the boom burst than the other fireships came in, wrapped in flames, in quick succession ; and this awful spectacle, joined to the tremendous explo-

sions of the Mediator and Lord Cochrane's vessel, produced such consternation in the French fleet that they all slipped their cables and ran ashore in wild confusion. The glare of so many prodigious fires, illuminating half the heavens, the flashes of the guns from the forts and retreating ships, the frequent flight of shells and rockets from the fire-vessels, and the bright reflection of the rays of light from the sides of the French ships in the background, formed a scene at once animating and sublime. One fireship fell on board the Ocean, which carried the French admiral's flag, as she lay grounded on the shore: in an instant the flames spread over her. At this moment the Tonnerre and Patriote also got entangled in the fearful group: inevitable destruction seemed to await them all, when a sudden roll of the sea threw the Tonnerre aside, and the fireship drifted past. When the day dawned at five o'clock, half the enemy's fleet were discerned ashore; at half-past seven only two were afloat; and Lord Cochrane, who had regained his own ship, the Imperieuse, repeatedly made signal to Lord Gambier, who lay twelve miles off, to advance. The last bore, "Half the fleet can destroy the enemy: eleven on shore."¹

Success as splendid as that gained at the Nile or Copenhagen now awaited the British admiral, and it had been brought within his reach by daring and skill not inferior to that of Nelson himself. But Nelson was not at the head of the fleet. Inferior to none of the captains who followed that immortal flag in personal gallantry, Lord Gambier wanted the moral courage, the confidence in himself, which, in hazardous circumstances, is requisite for decisive success in a commander. At ten minutes before six Lord Cochrane had first made signal that half the fleet was ashore; and, if the admiral had instantly weighed anchor and stood in to the roads, he would, at eight o'clock, have been within reach of fire, when only two of them were afloat. Instead of this, he did nothing till half-past nine, and then, instead of making the signal to move, merely called a council of war of flag-captains to come on board his ship; and it was, in consequence, not till a quarter before eleven that the fleet weighed; and having advanced halfway,² anchored again six miles from the

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

¹ James, iv
109, 111.
Brenton, il.
280, 281.
French Official Account.
James, iv.
109.

24.
Attack on
the ships
ashore, and
destruction of
part of them.

² Lord Gambier's account. Ann. Reg. 435. App. to Chron. James, iv. 110, 116. Brenton, il. 281, 282. Thib. vii. 261.

CHAP.
LXI.
1800.

enemy, in the belief that their ships could not be got off, and that it was hazardous, till the tide had risen higher, to venture farther in amidst the intricate shoals of Basque Roads. The *Ætna* bomb and some frigates and lighter vessels were, however, moved on under the orders of Captain Bligh. Meanwhile the French fleet evinced extraordinary activity in getting their vessels off the shore, and as the tide rose several were floated and warped up the Charente.

25.
Lord
Cochrane ad-
vances unsup-
ported, and
gains partial
success.

Stung to the quick by seeing his noble prizes thus eluding his grasp, Lord Cochrane, with heroic gallantry, advanced himself to the attack in his frigate the *Imperieuse*. He was quickly followed by Captain Bligh with the bomb and light vessels, and a heavy cannonade was commenced on the most exposed of the enemy's ships. The *Calcutta* of fifty guns quickly struck her colours to the *Imperieuse*, the *Ville de Varsovie* and *Aquilon* soon after yielded to the concentric fire of the other frigates, and were burned as soon as the prisoners were removed; and the *Tonnerre* was set on fire by her own crew, and blew up. So general was the consternation on the part of the enemy, that another French seventy-four, the *Tourville*, was abandoned by its crew, and might have been taken possession of by an English boat's crew, which, unaware of its condition, accidentally came very near. The *Indienne* frigate was also burned by the enemy. The other ships, however, though seriously injured, and two of them rendered unserviceable by being thrown ashore in the tempestuous gale, were by great efforts got afloat during the high tides which followed the strong westerly wind that prevailed during the action, and warped into safe anchorage in the upper part of the Charente.¹

¹ James, iv.
110, 122.
Brenton, ii.
281, 282.
Thib. vii. 261.
Lord Gam-
bler's Ac-
count, Ann.
Reg. 435.
App. to
Chron.

26.
Proceedings
which follow-
ed in Eng-
land.

Lord Cochrane was deservedly made a Knight of the Bath for the admirable skill and coolness exhibited by him on this trying occasion; and there cannot be a doubt, when the French accounts are compared with the English, that, if he had had the command of the fleet, the whole enemy's ships would have been destroyed. Such as it was, the success was almost equal to that of Lord Howe in those seas fifteen years before, and it would have thrown the nation into transports of joy at the commencement of

the war. But Lord Nelson had spoiled the English for any thing less than complete success; and murmurs soon began to spread against Lord Gambier for not having in a more energetic manner supported Lord Cochrane on that occasion. These were soon materially increased by the strong charges openly advanced against the commander-in-chief by Admiral Harvey, the second in command, one of the bravest captains of Trafalgar, who burned with desire to signalise himself against the enemy, and had expressed his opinion on the occasion, perhaps, with more frankness than discretion. Lord Cochrane also intimated, that if the thanks of the House of Commons were moved to Lord Gambier, he would oppose it in parliament. The result was, that Admiral Harvey was brought to a court-martial for the words he had uttered, cashiered, and dismissed the service, though he was shortly after restored for his gallantry at that memorable battle, with the general approbation of the navy; and Lord Gambier, after a protracted trial, was acquitted by his court-martial, and afterwards received the thanks of both houses of parliament, as well as Lord Cochrane and the other officers and men employed on the occasion.¹

Napoleon's opinion on this matter was decided. "Cochrane," said he, "not only could have destroyed the whole French ships, but he might and would have taken them out, had the English admiral supported him as he ought to have done; for, in consequence of the signal made by the French admiral for every one to shift for himself, they became panic-struck, and cut their cables. Their dread of the fire-ships was so great, that they actually threw their powder overboard, so that they could have offered very little resistance. Fear deprived the French captains of their senses. Had Cochrane been supported, he would have taken every one of the ships."² Impressed with these ideas, the French Emperor brought the officers of his lost vessels to trial; and Lafond, the captain of the Calcutta, was condemned and executed, and two others were sentenced to imprisonment.³

Lord Cochrane was, after the death of Nelson, the greatest naval commander of that age of glory. Equal to his great predecessor in personal gallantry, enthusiastic ardour, and devotion to his country, he was perhaps his

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

¹ Brenton, ii. 285, 286.
James, iv. 118, 121.

27.
Napoleon's opinion on this subject.

² O'Meara, ii. 292.

³ Thib. vii. 261.

CHAP.
LXL

1809.

28.

Character
of Lord
Cochrane.

superior in original genius, inventive power, and inexhaustible resources. The skill and indefatigable perseverance with which during the Spanish war, when in command only of his own frigate, he alarmed and distracted the whole coast from Toulon to Barcelona, has never been surpassed; with the crew of a frigate, which did not exceed three hundred and fifty men, he kept ten thousand of the enemy constantly occupied. It was his misfortune to arrive at manhood and high command only towards the close of the war, when the enemy's fleets had disappeared from the ocean, and the glorious opportunities of its earlier years had passed away: more truly than Alexander the Great, he might have wept that there no longer remained a world to conquer. His coolness in danger was almost unparalleled even in the English navy, and in the days of Nelson and Collingwood: his men, nevertheless, had such confidence in his judgment and resources, that they would have followed wherever he led, even to the cannon's mouth. Unhappily for himself and his country, he engaged with little discretion when ashore in party politics; he stood forth as a prominent opponent of government on various occasions, on which he unnecessarily put himself forward in contests with which he had no concern; while his strong inventive turn led him, when unemployed, to connect himself with some transactions with which his heroic qualities had no affinity.

29.
His indiscretions lead unhappily to his disgrace.

In consequence of these unhappy indiscretions and connexions, he was, towards the close of the war, brought to trial before the court of King's Bench, for a hoax practised for jobbing purposes on the Stock Exchange, and, under the direction of Lord Ellenborough, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment and an ignominious punishment, the worst part of which the better feeling of government led them to remit. The result was, that the hero of Basque Roads was dismissed the navy, bereft of his honours, and driven into the service of the South American republics, where his exploits, of the most extraordinary and romantic character, powerfully contributed

* In Basque Roads, a seaman, sitting by Lord Cochrane's side in the boat, was killed by a cannon-shot from one of the French vessels, when in the act of looking through a telescope at the enemy's fleet: without saying a word, or averting his eye, he took the instrument out of the dead man's hand and completed the observation.

to destroy the last relics of the Spanish empire in that quarter, and establish the doubtful ascendancy of democratic fervour. But in a free country no deed of injustice, whether popular or ministerial, can permanently blast a noble character. With the changes of time, the power which had oppressed England's greatest existing naval hero passed away : another generation succeeded, to which his exploits were an object of admiration, his weaknesses of forgiveness, his wrongs of commiseration. One of the most deservedly popular acts of the new ministry, which succeeded to the helm after the overthrow of the Tory administration, was to restore him to the rank and the honours of which he had been deprived ; and there remains now, to the historian, only the grateful duty of lending his humble efforts to aid in rescuing from unmerited obloquy the victim of aristocratic, as he has frequently done those of popular injustice*.

The defeat and blockade of the French squadron in Basque Roads was shortly felt in the capture of the French West India islands, to relieve which was the object of its ill-fated sortie from Brest harbour. A British expedition sailed from Jamaica, and appeared off Martinique in the end of January. The landing was effected without any resistance ; and the enemy having been defeated in a general action some days after, they were shut up in Fort Bourbon, the principal stronghold in the island, which shortly after surrendered at discretion, with three thousand men. This was followed, some months afterwards, by a successful descent on the colony and fortress of St Domingo, which,¹ with two battalions of

CHAP.
LXI.
1800.

30.
Capture of
Martinique
and St Do-
mingo, in the
West Indies.
Feb. 2.
Feb. 18.

July 2.
Ann. Reg.
228 and 401.
App. to
Chron.

* Lord Cochrane was tried for alleged accession to the Stock Exchange hoax, before a most able and powerful judge, Lord Ellenborough, and being convicted, was sentenced to imprisonment and the pillory. There can be no doubt that the evidence tending to connect him with the facts charged was of a very strong, though chiefly of a circumstantial kind, and the judge was constrained to exhibit the case in an unfavourable light against the accused to the jury. Yet the author, after hearing Lord Cochrane deliver his defence in the House of Commons, on July 7, 1814, has never entertained a doubt of his innocence ; and, even if the facts charged had been distinctly brought home to him, it was surely a most unwarrantable stretch to sentence to the degrading punishment of the pillory so heroic a character, especially for a proceeding involving no moral turpitude, and rarely, if ever, before or since made the object of punishment. This part of the sentence was immediately and most properly remitted by government ; but the result of the trial hung heavily on the hero of Basque Roads in this country for twenty years afterwards. In 1847 he was, from the general sense now entertained of the injustice he had undergone, restored to his rank in the navy and honours of the Bath, with the unanimous approval of the nation.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

infantry, were taken by General Carmichael. Cayenne was also reduced; so that, as Cuba and the other Spanish settlements in those latitudes were now allied colonies, the French flag was entirely excluded from the West Indies.

31.
And of the
Isle of Bour-
bon in the
East.
Sept. 21.

The Isle of France in the Indian ocean, was at the same time strictly blockaded, and, it was foreseen, must ere long capitulate; the Isle of Bourbon surrendered on the 21st September; the French settlement on the Senegal river, on the western coast of Africa, had fallen into the hands of the English; and preparations were making on a great scale for an attack on Batavia, and the important island of Java in the Indian archipelago. Thus, in every direction, the last distant settlements of Napoleon were falling into the hands of the British; and, at the time when the triumphant conclusion of the Austrian war seemed to give him the undisputed command of continental Europe, the maritime superiority of England was producing its natural results, in the successive acquisition of the whole colonies of the globe.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1809, 228,
and 429, 461.
App. to
Chron. Jom.
ii. 296.

32.
Reduction of
the seven
Ionian
Islands.
Oct. 3.

Important success also attended the British arms, both by sea and land, in the Mediterranean. A powerful naval expedition was despatched in autumn, by Lord Collingwood, with sixteen hundred land troops on board, who, after a slight resistance, made themselves masters of the seven islands of Zante, Cephalonia, Corfu, &c., which were permanently placed under the protection and sway of Great Britain. The importance of this acquisition was not at that period perceived; but, by giving Great Britain a permanent footing in the neighbourhood of Greece, and the command of Corfu, the finest harbour and strongest fortress in the Adriatic, it powerfully contributed in the end to counterbalance the influence of the cabinet of St Petersburg in that quarter, and may be regarded as the first step in a series of events linked together by a chain of necessary though unperceived connexion—the Greek Revolution—the battle of Navarino—the prostration of Turkey—the establishment of a Christian government in Greece—the subjugation of Persia by Russia—and rapid extension of Muscovite influence in Khorassan. These events are destined, to all human appearance, in their ultimate consequences, to roll back to the East² the tide of civilised conquest—array the powers of the West in fearful colli-

² Ann. Reg.
1809. Lord
Colling-
wood's Des-
patch, Oct.
30, 1809.
App. to
Chron. 530,
531.

sion in Central Asia—and prepare, in the hostile efforts of European ambition, that general regeneration of the regions of the sun, which, for mysterious purposes, Providence has hitherto prevented from taking place by the desolating sway of Mahometan power.

In conformity with the earnest desire expressed by the Austrian government, that a diversion of considerable magnitude should be attempted on the coast of Italy, an expedition was prepared in the Sicilian harbours in the course of this summer, to menace the coast of Naples. As usual, however, the British government were so tardy in their operations, that not only was ample time given to the enemy to prepare for his defence at the menaced points, but it was utterly impossible that the attempt could have any beneficial effect on the vital line of operations in the valley of the Danube. The fleet, having no less than fifteen thousand troops, half British and half Sicilian, on board, did not set sail from Palermo till the beginning of June; that is to say, more than a month after the Archduke John had retired from Italy, and the theatre of contest between him and Eugene Beauharnais had been transferred to the Hungarian plains. It at first met with considerable success. The island of Ischia, which forms so conspicuous an object in the bay of Naples, was assaulted and carried by the British troops: Procida was next taken, close to the shore, with a flotilla of forty gun-boats, fifteen hundred prisoners, and a hundred pieces of cannon; while a detachment of the English forces, landing in the straits of Messina, took possession of the castle of Scylla and the chain of fortified posts opposite to Sicily. These advantages had at first the effect of spreading a great alarm along the Neapolitan coast, and occasioning the recall of a considerable body of men whom Murat had detached to the support of the Viceroy; but they led to no other or more durable result. This powerful British force, nearly as large as that which gained the battle of Vimiera, and which, if landed and skilfully brought into action, would probably have overthrown the whole army of Naples, was shortly after withdrawn without attempting any thing farther, by the instructions of government, who intended this only as a diversion; and the fortified posts at Scylla, after being several times

CHAP.
LXI.
1800.

32.
Fruitless ex-
pedition of
Sir J. Stuart
against the
coast of
Naples.

June 6.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

¹ Sir J.
Stuart's
Desp. June 5,
1809. App.
to Chron.
457. Ann.
Reg. Pel. iv.
41, 42.

taken and retaken, were at length abandoned to the enemy. This expedition, from its tardy appearance and inconsiderable exploits, could hardly be said to have contributed much to aid the common cause; but, from the alarm which it diffused through the Italian peninsula, it had a powerful effect in accelerating the ecclesiastical revolution which has already been noticed, and may be regarded as the immediate cause of the arrest of the Pope, which in its ultimate effects produced such important results.¹

34.
Brilliant suc-
cess of Lord
Collingwood
in the Medi-
terranean.
Oct. 80.

A maritime operation, attended with more decisive results, took place in autumn, in the bay of Genoa. A detachment of the Toulon fleet having put to sea, with a view to carry succours to the French troops in the bay of Rosas, which were cut off by the Spaniards from direct communication with their own country, they were immediately chased by Lord Collingwood, who blockaded that port; and after a hard pursuit, the ships of war were forced to separate from the convoy, and three ships of the line and one frigate driven ashore, where they were burned by the enemy, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the British. Meanwhile, the transports, under convoy of a frigate and some smaller armed ships, in all eleven vessels, having taken refuge in the bay of Rosas, under protection of the powerful castle and batteries there, deemed themselves beyond the reach of attack. In that situation, however, they were assailed by a detachment of the British fleet, under the orders of Captain Hallowell, who at once formed the daring resolution of cutting out the whole with the boats of the ships under his command. The arrangements for this purpose, made with the judgment and foresight which might have been expected from that distinguished hero of the Nile, were carried into effect by Lieutenant Tailour with a spirit and resolution above all praise. In sight of the fleet, the boats stretched out, the crews being at the highest point of animation, filling the air with their cheers: and rapidly advancing under a very heavy fire from the armed ships and batteries, carried the whole vessels in the most gallant style, and either burned or brought away them all. Brilliant, however, as these naval operations were, they had no decisive effect on the issue of the war.² The maritime contest was already decided: at

² Lord Col-
lingwood's
Desp. Nov. 1.
Capt. Hallo-
well, Nov. 1.
Ann. Reg.
1809, 511.
515. App. to
Chron.

Trafalgar the dominion of the seas had finally passed to the British flag. It was at land that the real struggle now lay; it was for the deliverance of other nations that England now fought; it was on the soldiers of Wellington that the eyes of the world were turned.

After the retreat of the English to Corunna, and the fall of Madrid, affairs in the Peninsula appeared wellnigh desperate. In Portugal there was only a corps of eight thousand British soldiers, chiefly in and around Lisbon, upon whom any reliance could be placed. For though about six thousand men, under Silveira, lay in the northern provinces, and the Lusitanian legion, of half that amount, on the north-eastern frontier, yet the composition of the forces of which these detachments consisted, was not such as to inspire any confidence as to their ability to contend with regular soldiers, or defend the country in the event of a fresh invasion. Their small numerical amount compelled Cradock, in the first instance, to concentrate his forces, which he did at Passa d'Arcos, close to the mouth of the Tagus, where he might be in a situation to embark with safety, if a serious invasion should be attempted. These dispositions, however, naturally spread the belief that the English were going to abandon the country, as they had done Galicia; and tumults broke out in various quarters, arising from the dread of this anticipated desertion. Towards the end of February, however, the arrival of six thousand men from England, under Sherbrooke and Mackenzie, having augmented Cradock's force to fourteen thousand, he was enabled to take a position in advance, covering the capital, at Saccavino, which soon, by reviving confidence, had the effect of removing the public apprehensions.¹

Affairs in Spain were still more unpromising. The army of Blake, which had suffered so severely at Espinosa and Reynosa, had dwindled away to eight or nine thousand ragged and half-starved troops, without either stores or artillery, who with difficulty maintained themselves in the Galician mountains: the remains of the soldiers of Aragon, about twenty thousand strong, had thrown themselves into Saragossa, where they were preparing to undergo a fresh siege. Castanos' men, who had come up from Andalusia, joined to some who had escaped from Some-

CHAP.
LXL
1809.

35.
State of
affairs in Por-
tugal, and
forces of the
patriots at
this period.

¹ Nap. II. 142,
159. Lond. i.
294, 295.

36.
And in Spain.

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

Sierra and Madrid, in all twenty-five thousand strong, were in La Mancha, and had their headquarters at Toledo; while ten or twelve thousand disorganised levies at Badajos, formed a sort of guard for the Central Junta, who had established themselves in that city after the fall of Madrid. As to the new levies in Andalusia, Granada, and Valencia, they were as yet too ill-disciplined and remote from the scene of action to be capable of affording any efficient support to regular troops in the earlier periods of the campaign. And though, in Catalonia, there were at least fifty thousand brave men in possession of Gerona, Rosas, Taragona, Tortosa, Lerida, and a strong central range of mountains, yet they were fully occupied with the invaders in their own bounds, and, without either seeking succour from, or being able to afford succour to the neighbouring provinces, resolutely maintained on their own hills an independent hostility. The patriot forces numbered in all scarcely a hundred and twenty thousand men, scattered over the whole extent of the Peninsula, without either any means of uniting with each other, any central authority to which they all yielded obedience, or any common object to which they could simultaneously be applied. At Madrid, Joseph reigned with the apparent consent of the nation: registers having been opened for the inscription of the names of those who were favourable to his government, no less than twenty-eight thousand heads of families in a few days enrolled themselves; and deputations from the municipal council, the council of the Indies, and all the incorporations, waited upon him at Valladolid to entreat that he would return to the capital and reassume the royal functions, with which he at length complied.¹

Jan. 22.
1 Lond. i.
294, 295.
Nap. ii. 4, 5.
Vict. et Conq.
xviii. 255,
257. Tor. ii.
204, 205.

37.
Forces and
distribution
of the French
in Spain.

On the other hand, the forces of Napoleon were much more formidable, both from the position which they occupied, and the number and quality of the troops of which they were composed. Instead of being spread out, like the English and Spanish hosts, round an immense circumference, without any means of communicating with or supporting each other, they were massed together in the central parts of the kingdom, and possessed the inestimable advantage of an interior and comparatively short line of communication. The total French force in

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

the Peninsula amounted, even after the Imperial Guards had departed for Germany, to two hundred and eighty thousand infantry, and forty thousand cavalry, of whom two hundred and forty thousand were present in the field with the eagles. Fifty thousand of this immense force protected the great line of communication with France, which was strengthened by three fortresses, and sixty-four fortified posts of correspondence; and the corps were so distributed that they could all support each other in case of need, or combine in any common operation. The northern provinces were parcelled out into military governments, the chiefs of which communicated with each other by means of moveable columns, repressed any attempt at insurrection, and levied military contributions on the inhabitants, to the amount not only of all the wants of their respective corps, but in some cases including immense fortunes to themselves. Nearly the whole charges of this enormous force were extorted from the conquered provinces. Soult, with twenty-three thousand effective men, lay at Corunna, while Ney, with fourteen thousand, occupied Asturias and the northern coast; Lannes and Moncey, with two corps, about forty-eight thousand strong, were charged with the siege of Saragossa; Victor was in Estremadura with twenty-five thousand; Mortier, with as many, in the valley of the Tagus; Sebastiani, who had succeeded to the command of Lefebvre's corps, observed the enemy's forces in La Mancha; St Cyr, with forty thousand, was stationed in Catalonia; and Joseph, with twelve thousand guards, was at Madrid.¹

¹ Belmas, l. 37, 38. Imp. Must. Rolls, Nap. ii. App. Nos. 1, 2.

The spirits of the Spaniards, which had been sunk to an extraordinary degree by the disasters of the preceding campaign, the capture of their capital, and the retreat of the English troops from Galicia, were first revived by the intelligence of the treaty so opportunely and generously concluded by Great Britain, at the moment of their greatest depression, by which she engaged never to conclude a separate peace with Napoleon; and by the resolution expressed in parliament by the ministers, notwithstanding the gloomy forebodings of the Opposition, never to abandon the cause of Spanish independence. These cheering announcements were speedily followed by deeds which clearly evinced an unabated resolution to maintain

38. Effect in the Peninsula of the English treaty, and resolution to defend Portugal and stand by Spain.

**CHAP.
LXI.**

1809.
March 2.

the contest. Measures were set on foot in Portugal, evidently preparatory to a protracted struggle. General Beresford had been appointed by the Regency field-marshal in the Portuguese service, and intrusted with the arduous duty of training and directing the new levies in that kingdom. Twenty thousand of these troops were taken into British pay, placed under the direction of British officers, and admitted to all the benefits of British upright administration: the Regency revived and enforced the ancient law of the monarchy, by which, in periods of peril, the whole male population capable of bearing arms were called out in defence of their country: numerous transports, filled with stores and muniments of war, daily arrived at Lisbon, which became a vast depot for the military operations of the kingdom. Finally, the landing of Sir Arthur Wellesley, with powerful reinforcements from England, was regarded at once as a pledge of sincerity in the cause, and the harbinger of yet higher glories than he had yet acquired. Reanimated by these vigorous steps on the part of their ally, not less than the breaking out of the Austrian war, and withdrawing of the Imperial Guard from the Peninsula, the Central Junta, which was now established at Seville, issued a spirited proclamation to their countrymen, in which, after recounting the propitious circumstances which were now appearing in their favour, they strongly recommended the general adoption of the guerilla system of warfare, and renewed their protestations never to make peace while a single Frenchman polluted the Spanish territory.¹

April 17.
¹ See proclamation in Belmas, i. App. No. 25. App. Lond. i. 294, 295. Nap. ii. 142. 159.

39.
Preparations for the siege of Saragossa.

Saragossa was the first place of note which was threatened by the French arms. The vicinity of that place to the frontier of the empire, its commanding situation on the banks of the Ebro, the valour of its inhabitants, and the renown which they had acquired by the successful issue of the last siege, all conspired to render its early reduction a matter of the highest interest to the Emperor. After the disastrous issue of the battle of Tudela, Palafox, with about fifteen thousand regular troops, had thrown himself into that city; but their number was soon augmented to thirty thousand, by the stragglers who had taken refuge there after that rout, to whom were soon joined fifteen thousand armed but undisciplined peasants, monks,

and mechanics. The enthusiasm of this motley crowd was inconceivable ; it recalled, in the nineteenth century, the days of Numantia and Saguntum. The citizens of the town were animated by the spirit of democratic freedom ; the peasants of the country by that of devout enthusiasm ; the monks by religious devotion ; the soldiers by former glory—all by patriotic fervour. By a singular combination of circumstances, but one which frequently occurred during the Spanish war, the three great principles which agitate mankind—the spirit of religion, the fervour of equality, the glow of patriotism—were all called into action at the same time, and brought to conspire to stimulate one common resistance ; and thence the obstinate defence of Saragossa and its deathless fame.¹

The defences of the place had been considerably strengthened since the former siege. The weak or ruined parts of the wall had been repaired, additional parapets erected in the most exposed situations, the suburbs included in new fortifications, barriers and trenches drawn across the principal streets, and the houses loopholed ; so that, even if the rampart were surmounted, a formidable resistance might be anticipated in the interior of the town. General Doyle, of the English service, had, ever since the termination of the first siege, been indefatigable in his efforts to strengthen the place. A large quantity of English muskets were distributed among the inhabitants ; ammunition, stores, and provisions, were provided in abundance ; the solid construction of the storehouses diminished to a considerable degree the chances of a successful bombardment ; and one hundred and eighty guns distributed on the ramparts gave token of a much more serious resistance than on the last memorable occasion. Such was the confidence of the Aragonese in the strength of the ramparts of Saragossa, the unconquerable spirit of its garrison, and the all-powerful protection of our Lady of the Pillar, that, on the approach of the French troops to invest the town, the peasants from all quarters flocked into it, burning with ardour and undaunted in resolution, so as to swell its defenders to fifty thousand men. But they brought with them, as into Athens when besieged by the Lacedemonians, the seeds of a contagious malady,² which among its now crowded dwellings spread with alarming

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

¹ Jom. iii.
125. Cav.
68, 69. Tor.
ii. 236, 237.

40.
Preparations
which had
been made for
the defence of
the place.

² Cav. 74, 87.
Tor. ii. 239,
240. Jom.
iii. 126, 127.
Belm. ii. 139,
140 ; and
Pièces
Just. i.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

41.
Preparatory
dispositions
of Palafox.

rapidity, and in the end proved more fatal even than the sword of the enemy.

Palafox exercised an absolute authority over the city, and such was the patriotic ardour of the inhabitants, that all his orders for the public defence were obeyed without a moment's hesitation, even though involving the sacrifice of the most valuable property, or dearest attachments of the people. If a house in the neighbourhood was required to be demolished to make way for the fire of the ramparts, hardly was the order given, than the proprietor himself levelled it with the ground. The shady groves, the delicious gardens in which the citizens so much delighted, were laid waste by the axe: in a few days the accumulated wealth of centuries disappeared in the environs of the town before the breath of patriotism. Palafox's provident care extended to every department; his spirit animated every rank: but such was the ardour of the people that their voluntary supplies anticipated every requisition, and amply provided for the multitude now accumulated within the walls. Terror was summoned to the aid of loyalty, and the fearful engines of popular power, the scaffold and the gallows, were erected on the public square, where some unhappy wretches, suspected of a leaning to the enemy, were indignantly executed.¹

To attack a town defended by fifty thousand armed men, animated by such a spirit, was truly a formidable undertaking; but the forces which Napoleon put at the disposal of his generals were adequate to the enterprise. Two strong corps, numbering together forty-three* thousand combatants, present with the eagles, were placed

* Colonel Napier (*Peninsular War*, ii. 25) says, that the besieging force was only 35,000; but this is a mistake, as the numbers proved by the Imperial Muster-Rolls, published by order of the French government, were as follows:—

Third corps—Junot's—Infantry and		
Cavalry,	}	22,473
Artillery,	.	788
Fifth corps—Mortier's—Infantry and		
Cavalry,	}	22,607
Artillery,	.	1660
Heavy artillery, Officers and men,	.	542
Engineers' establishment,	.	1017
Total,		49,087

Sixteen thousand five hundred of the infantry and cavalry of the Third corps alone were employed in the siege, the remainder being devoted to keeping up the communications; making the force actually employed in the siege forty-three thousand men.—See BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, vol. ii. 333, 339; an official work of great accuracy and splendour.

¹ Belm. ii.
143, 144.
Tor. ii. 238.
Cav. 77, 81.
Jones, i. 170.

under the command of Marshals Moncey and Mortier; and the operations of the siege began in good earnest in the middle of December. The fortified outpost of Torrero was carried after a slight resistance, the garrison having withdrawn into the town; but an assault, two days afterwards, upon the suburb in the same quarter, though at first successful, was finally repulsed with great slaughter by Palafox, who hastened to the menaced point, and by his example powerfully contributed to restore the day. An honourable capitulation was then proposed by Mortier, accompanied with the intimation that Madrid had fallen, and the English were retiring before Napoleon to their ships. But even this disheartening intelligence had no effect upon the resolution of the brave governor, who replied, that if Madrid had fallen, it was because it had been sold, but that the ramparts of Saragossa were still untouched, and he would bury himself and his soldiers under its ruins rather than capitulate. Despairing now of effecting an accommodation, the French marshals completed the investment of the town on both sides of the river; and the parallels being at length considerably advanced, a powerful fire was opened on the walls, especially on the convents of the Augustines, the Capuchins, and Santa Engracia, the only structures resembling bastions in their whole circumference.¹

Marshal Junot arrived and took the command of the besieging force on the 2d January, and every day and night thereafter was signalised by bloody combats. Sorties were daily attempted by the Spanish troops, and sometimes with success. But in spite of all their efforts the progress of the besiegers was sensible, and, by the middle of January, almost all the fortified posts outside the rampart had fallen into their hands. The feeble parapet of the wall was soon levelled by the French cannon; and the heroic Spanish gunners had no defence but bags of earth, which the citizens replaced as fast as they were shattered by the enemy's shot, joined to their own unconquerable courage. The *tête-du-pont* of the Huerba was carried with very little loss; and though the bridge itself was blown up by the besieged, the enemy made their way across the stream, and from fifty-five pieces of heavy cannon thundered on the mouldering

CHAP.
LXI.

1800.

42.

Forces of the
besiegers,
and progress
of the siege
before the
trenches were
opened.

Dec. 20.
Dec. 22.

Dec. 30.

¹ Jones, i.
171, 173.
Tor. ii. 241,
242. Cav.
91, 93. Belm.
ii. 153, 163.

43.

Assault and
fall of all the
external for-
tified posts.

Jan. 15.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

rampart, which in that place was so dilapidated as to give way after a few hours' battering. But, meanwhile, the Spaniards were not idle. Every inch of ground was resolutely contested, and the most extraordinary means were taken to keep up the spirits of the besieged: the report was spread by the generals, and gained implicit credence, that the Emperor had been defeated, several of the marshals killed, and that Don Francisco Palafox, brother to the commander-in-chief, was approaching with a powerful army to raise the siege. In truth, Don Philippe Perena, a guerilla leader, had succeeded in drawing together six thousand peasants, with whom he kept the field in Aragon, and disquieted the rear of the French army. And although neither the numbers nor composition of this force was such as to give them any serious alarm, the knowledge of its existence had a surprising effect in supporting the efforts of the besieged, who now stood much in need of such encouragement, from the crowded condition of the population shut up within the narrow circle of the old walls, and the fearful ravages which contagious maladies were making among an indigent and suffering multitude, driven into crowded cellars to avoid the terrible and incessant fire of the enemy's bombs and cannon-shot.¹

¹ Belm. ii. 163, 204.
Nap. ii. 31.
Tor. ii. 243, 244. Cav. 93, 101. Rogn. 22, 24.

44.
Storming of the convents of Santa Engracia and the Capuchins in the ramparts.

Jan. 27.

Matters were in this state when Marshal Lannes arrived, intrusted by Napoleon, who was dissatisfied with the progress made, with the general direction of the siege, and the command of both the corps employed in its prosecution. The influence of his master mind speedily appeared in the increased energy of the attacks, and more thorough co-operation of the troops engaged in the undertaking. Several nocturnal sorties attempted by the Spaniards to retard their progress towards the convent of Santa Engracia, which itself formed a prominent part of the wall towards the river, having failed to stop the besiegers, an assault on that quarter was ordered by Marshal Lannes on the 27th at noon. Two practicable breaches had been made in that quarter, and a third nearer the centre of the town, in the convent of Santa Engracia. The tolling of the great bell of the new tower warned the Saragossans of the approach of the enemy, and all instantly hastened

to the post of danger. Hardly had they arrived when the assaulting columns appeared at the breaches: vast crowds of daring men issued from the trenches, and with loud shouts rushed on to the attack. Such was the vigour of the assault that, after a hard struggle, the French, though twice repulsed, at length succeeded in making themselves masters of the convent of St Joseph; while, in the centre, the attacking column on Santa Engracia, after reaching the summit of the breach, was hurled headlong to its foot by a gallant effort of the Spanish soldiers. Returning again, however, with redoubled vigour to the charge, they not only penetrated, but made themselves masters of the adjoining convent, where, in spite of the efforts of the besieged to dispossess them, they maintained themselves till evening. All night the tocsin rang incessantly to call the citizens to the scene of danger, and devoted crowds rushed with indomitable courage to the very mouth of the enemy's guns; but though they fought from every house and window with the most desperate resolution, they could not drive the assailants from the posts they had won.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

¹ Belm. ii.
218, 227.
Cav. 103, 105.
Tor. ii. 246,
247. Nap.
ii. 34, 37.

The walls of Saragossa had now gone to the ground; and an ordinary garrison, having lost its military defences, would never have thought of prolonging the contest. But the valour of the inhabitants remained; and from the ruins of all regulated or acknowledged modes of defence emerged the redoubtable warfare of the people. On the very next day the commander of their engineers, San Genis, a man of equal professional skill and resolution, fell on the battery of Palafox. Though his manners were gentle, yet he had the true spirit of a soldier, and often said, "It is needless ever to cite me to a council of war in which there is to be a question of capitulating: my opinion is, we can, under all circumstances, defend ourselves." The French chief of engineers, La Coste, a young man of similar acquirements and valour, perished at the same time; but the loss of their skilled talents was now of little moment. The dreadful war from house to house had commenced, in which individual courage more than directing talent was required. No sooner was it dis-

45.
Obstinate
defence of the
town after the
walls were
taken.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

Jan. 28.

covered that the enemy had effected a lodgment within the walls, than the people assembled in crowds in every house and building near the structures which they occupied, and kept up so incessant a fire on the assailants that for some days Lannes deemed it not advisable to provoke an open combat, but to confine his efforts to strengthening the posts he had won, and preparing the way for farther progress by the more certain methods of sap and mine. Meantime the passions of the people were roused to the very highest pitch by the dread of treason or any accommodation with the enemy; and popular vehemence, overwhelming all the restraints of law or order, sacrificed, almost every night, persons to the blind suspicions of the multitude, who were found hanging in the morning on gallows erected in the Cosso and market-place.¹

Feb. 2.
1 Cav. 107,
111. Tor. II.
247, 248.
Nap. II. 37,
38. Belm.
II. 226, 277.
Rogn. 26, 30.

46.
Slow progress
of the assail-
ants.

Feb. 2.

The enemy's efforts were directed chiefly against the convents of San Augustin and Santa Monaca, and a breach having been effected in their walls they were carried by assault; but the assailants, having endeavoured, after this success, to penetrate into the principal street of the Cosso, were repulsed with great slaughter. Every house, every room in the quarters where the attack was going on with most vehemence, became the theatre of mortal combat. As the original assailants and defenders were killed or wounded, others were hurried forward to the spot. The dead and the dying lay heaped upon each other to the height of several feet above the ground; but, mounting on this ghastly pile, the undaunted foemen still maintained the fight for hours together, with such obstinacy that no progress could be made on either side; and not unfrequently, while still fast locked in the deadly struggle, the whole—dead, dying, and combatants—were together blown into the air by the explosion of the mines beneath. Yet even these awful catastrophes were turned by the besieged to their advantage: the ruined walls afforded no protection to the French soldiers; and, from the adjoining windows, the Aragonese marksmen brought down, with unerring aim, every hostile figure that appeared among the ruins.²

1 Rogn. 34,
37. Cav. 113,
118. Belm.
II. 227, 240.

Taught by these dangers, the French engineers dimin-

ished the charge of powder in their mines, so as to blow up the inside of the houses only, without throwing down the external walls ; and in these half-ruined edifices they maintained themselves, and pushed on fresh mines and attacks. Still, however, the convents and churches remained in the hands of the Spaniards ; and as long as these massy structures were garrisoned by their undaunted troops, the progress of the French was not only extremely slow, but liable to continual disaster from the sallies, often successful, of the besieged, and the countermines with which they thwarted the progress of the subterraneous attacks. Disheartened by this murderous, and apparently interminable warfare, which continued without intermission, night and day, for three weeks, the French soldiers began to murmur at their lot ; they almost despaired of conquering a city where every house was defended like a citadel, where every street could be won only by torrents of blood, and victory was attained only by destruction ; the wounded, the sick, had fearfully thinned their ranks ; and that depression was rapidly spreading amongst them which is so often the forerunner of the greatest calamities. " Scarce a fourth of the town," said they, " is won, and we are already exhausted. We must wait for reinforcements, or we shall all perish among these ruins, which will become our own tombs before we can force the last of these fanatics from the last of their dens."¹

But, while depression was thus paralysing the arm of the besiegers, the miseries of the besieged were incomparably greater. The incessant shower of bombs and cannon-balls which fell upon the town, had for a month past, obliged the whole inhabitants, not actually combating, to take refuge in the cellars ; and the close confinement of so vast a multitude in these narrow and gloomy abodes, joined to the failure of provisions, and mental depression springing from the unbounded calamities with which they were surrounded, induced a terrible fever, which was now making the most dreadful ravages. What between the devastations of the epidemic and the sword of the enemy, several thousands, in the middle of February, were dying every day ; room could not be found in the charnel-houses for such a multitude of

CHAP.
LXL.

1809.

47.

Despair begins to spread among the French soldiers.

¹ Belm. ii. 227, 266.
Nap. ii. 39, 40. Rogniat. 34, 39. Cav. 113, 123.

48.

Miseries to which the besieged were exposed from pestilence.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

bodies, and the living and dead were shut up together in these subterraneous abodes; while the roar of artillery, the explosion of mines, the crash of falling houses, the flames of conflagration, and the alternate shouts and cries of the combatants, shook the city night and day without intermission above their heads. Happy those who expired amidst this scene of unutterable woe! yet even they bequeathed with their last breath to the survivors the most solemn injunctions to continue to the last this unparalleled struggle; and from these dens of the living and the dead issued daily crowds of warriors, attenuated, indeed, and livid, but who maintained with unconquerable resolution a desperate resistance. But human nature, even in its most exalted mood, cannot go beyond a certain point. Saragossa was about to fall; but she was to leave a name immortal, like Numantia or Saguntum, in the annals of mankind.¹

¹ Belm. ii.
267, 277.
Cav. 129,
131. Rogn.
38, 42. Tor.
249, 250.

⁴
Heroic deeds
of the women
of Saragossa.

Such was the heroic spirit which animated the inhabitants, that it inspired even the softer sex to deeds of valour. Among these Augustina Zaragoza was peculiarly distinguished. She had served with unshaken courage a cannon near the gate of Portillo at the former siege, and she took her station there again when the enemy returned. "See, general," said she to Palafox when he visited that quarter, "I am again with my old friend." Her husband being struck by a cannon-ball as he served the battery, she calmly stepped into his place, and pointed the gun as he lay bleeding at her side. Frequently she was to be seen at the head of an assaulting party, wrapped in her cloak, sword in hand, cheering on the soldiers to the discharge of their duty. She was at length taken prisoner; but being carried to the French hospital, and taken dangerously ill, she contrived to escape. A female corps was formed to carry provisions and water to the combatants, and remove the wounded, at the head of which was Donna Benita, a lady of rank. Several hundred women and children perished during the siege, not by bombs or cannon-shot, but in actual combat.²

² Ric, 220,
221. South.
ii. 200.

Marshal Lannes, unshaken by the murmurs of his troops, was indefatigable in his endeavours to prosecute the siege to a successful issue. He pointed out to them, with justice, that the losses of the besieged greatly

exceeded their own, and that, even if the fierceness of their defence should continue unabated, their destruction must speedily ensue from the united ravages of famine and pestilence. Meanwhile, intelligence arrived of the evacuation of Galicia by the English, and various successes in other parts of Spain; and these advices having somewhat elevated their spirits, a general assault took place on the 18th on both banks of the Ebro. The division Gazan burst with irresistible violence into the suburb on the left bank, which the Spaniards had hitherto held; and, pushing on to the convent of St Lazan, which stood on the water's edge, after a bloody repulse, made good their entrance through an enormous breach which their artillery had made in its walls. This important acquisition rendered the suburb no longer tenable; and its brave defenders were forced to retreat across the bridge into the town. Part effected their object, amidst a terrific fire of grape, bombs, and musket-shot, which raked them from both sides in rushing through the perilous defile; the remainder, to the number of fifteen hundred, after vainly endeavouring to cut their way through the dense masses of the enemy, were surrounded, and, having exhausted their ammunition, were made prisoners. This was a fatal blow to the Spaniards. Fifty pieces of heavy artillery, placed in the abandoned suburb, played across the Ebro on the defenceless houses on the quay, and soon laid them in ruins. Before the besieged could recover from their consternation, Lannes commenced a furious assault on the monastery of the Trinity, near the University; and, after a vain attempt to carry it by open force, the assailants succeeded in making good their entrance during the confusion occasioned by the explosion of a petard. At the same time, a mine, charged with sixteen hundred pounds of powder, exploded with a terrific shock near the Comic Theatre; and six mines had been run under the street of the Cosso, each of which was charged with three thousand pounds of powder, more than sufficient to lay all that part of the city in ruins, and expose naked and defenceless all those quarters which were still held by the patriots.¹

Happily it was not necessary to have recourse to that

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

50.

Able efforts
and successes
of Marshal
Lannes on
the left of the
Ebro.
Feb. 18.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xviii.
291, 293.
Cav. 137,
139. Tor. ii.
251, 252.
Nap. ii. 44,
45. Belm. ii.
308, 317.
Rogniat, 42,
45.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

51.
Capitulation
of Saragossa.
Feb. 20.

extremity. Palafox, who, from the commencement of the siege, had discharged with heroic resolution the duties of a commander-in-chief, and, though laid prostrate for nearly a month by the prevailing epidemic, still held the keys of the city in his grasp, now perceived that further resistance was fruitless. His brother, Don Francisco, had not only been unable to throw succours into the place, but had been driven off to a distance, and the troops despatched against him had returned to reinforce the besieging host: the malignant fever daily made great ravages, both among the troops and inhabitants; hardly nine thousand of the former remained capable of bearing arms, and the latter were diminished in a still greater proportion; there were neither hospitals for the thousands of sick who crowded the city, nor medicines for their relief. In these circumstances, this noble chief, who was so reduced by fever as to be unable any longer to bear the burden of the command, and yet knew that as soon as the ascendant of his character was no longer felt the resistance could not be prolonged, took the resolution to send his aide-de-camp to Lannes to negotiate for a capitulation.¹

Feb. 19.
1 Cav. 143,
157. Rogniat,
47, 52. Ric,
230, 231.52.
Terms of the
capitulation.

The terms he contended for were, that the garrison should march out with the honours of war, and be allowed to retire to the nearest Spanish army: but these proposals were, of course, rejected, and Lannes at first would only consent to protect the women and children. Don Pedro Ric, who, in the name of the Junta of Saragossa, was intrusted with the negotiation, replied with great spirit, "That would be delivering us to the mercy of the enemy: if that be the case, Saragossa will continue to defend herself, for she has still weapons, ammunition, and, above all, hands." Fearful of driving to desperation a body of men of whose prowess he had recently had such ample proof, the French marshal upon this agreed to a capitulation, by which it was stipulated that the garrison should march out the following morning with the honours of war, and be conveyed as prisoners of war into France; the officers retaining their swords, horses, and baggage, and the soldiers their knapsacks; that private property and public worship should be respected, and the armed peasants dismissed.² Situated as the besieged were, these terms

2 Cav. 143,
147. Rogniat,
47, 52. Tor,
252, 253.
Don Pedro
Ric, 230, 231.

could not be regarded but as eminently favourable, and an enduring monument of their heroic constancy. But such was the spirit which still animated the people, that they murmured loudly at any capitulation; and it was with difficulty that the ruling junta prevented an insurrection during the night, for the purpose of continuing the contest till the last extremity.

On the following day at noon, twelve thousand men, for the most part pale, emaciated, and livid in hue, marched out, and having surrendered their arms, which they had hardly strength left to hold, to their courageous enemies, were sent into the besiegers' camp, where they received the rations of which they stood so much in need. The French troops then marched into the town; and never had such a spectacle before been exhibited in modern times. Six thousand dead bodies still lay unburied in the streets, among the fragments of buildings or around the churches. Half the houses were in ruins; infants were striving in vain to get nutriment from their dying mothers; from the vaults and subterraneous rooms a few squalid persons of both sexes, like ghosts, were issuing, drawing the corpses, hardly distinguishable save by their stillness from the persons who bore them. The pestilence spread almost visibly from those living charnel-houses, alike on friend and foe around. Fifty-four thousand human beings had perished during the siege, of whom only six thousand were killed by the sword or fire of the enemy: the awful plague had carried off the rest. Sixteen thousand sick, for the most part in a dying state, encumbered the town when hostilities ceased, and filled every quarter with woe. The French had three thousand killed and twelve thousand wounded during the struggle.* Fifty days of open trenches had been borne by a town defended by nothing but a single wall; half that time the contest had continued with more than forty thousand

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

52.
Hideous appearance of the town when surrendered. Losses on both sides.

* Rogniat says the French loss was three thousand only, but without specifying whether it was killed, or killed and wounded; and it seems clear that it was the former only—an obscurity which has misled many later writers. It is incredible that forty-eight thousand French, headed by Lannes, should have been arrested for fifty days of open trenches, by a resistance which cost them only three thousand men.—See ROGNAT, 49, 51; and SCHEPFLER, *Hist. de la Guerre d'Espagne*, ii. 195, 196. In fact, we have the authority of Suchet for the assertion, that Junot's corps in May, which at the commencement of the siege was twenty-three thousand strong, could only muster ten thousand men at its termination.—SUCHET, ii. 14, 15.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

besiegers after that feeble defence had fallen, and the town, in a military sense, was taken. Thirty-three thousand cannon-shot, and sixteen thousand bombs, had been thrown into the place: yet at the close of the siege the assailants were only masters of a fourth of the town; thirteen convents and churches had been taken, but forty remained to be forced. It was domestic pestilence, not foreign arms, which subdued Saragossa. Modern Europe has not so memorable a siege to recount; and to the end of the world, even after Spain and France have sunk before the waves of time, and all the glories of modern Europe have passed away, it will stand forth in undecaying lustre, a monument of heroic devotion, which will thrill the hearts of the brave and the generous throughout every succeeding age.¹

¹ Belm. ii. 318, 327.
Cav. 148, 149.
Don Pedro Ric, 232.
Schepeler, ii. 196. South.
ii. 198, 199.

54.
Cruel use which the French generals made of their victory.

The lustre which the French arms justly acquired by the energy and perseverance which they had displayed during this memorable siege, was much tarnished by the cruel or rapacious conduct of the chiefs by whom it had been concluded. Don Basilio Boggiero, the former tutor and present friend of Palafox, who was watching beside that heroic chief's bedside to administer to him the last consolations of religion, was, by the express commands of Lannes, three days after the capitulation, dragged at midnight out of the sick-chamber, and, along with Don Santiago Sas, another courageous chaplain, who had been distinguished alike by his bravery in the last and the present siege, bayoneted on the banks of the Ebro, and their dead bodies thrown into the river. The French had the cruelty to exact from the wo-struck city of Saragossa, immediately after their entry, a contribution of fifty thousand pairs of shoes, and eight thousand pairs of boots, with medicines and every other requisite for an hospital; a service of china and fitting up for a tennis-court were demanded for the particular use of Marshal Junot. The church of our Lady of the Pillar, one of the richest in Spain, was rifled by Marshal Lannes of jewels to the enormous amount of 4,687,000 francs, or £184,000, the whole of which he carried with him into France,² to the infinite mortification of Madame Junot, who conceived her husband had an equal right to the precious spoil, and has, in her vexation,³ revealed the whole details of the

² Tor. ii. 371.
D'Abr. xii. 221.

³ D'Abr. xii. 213, 214.

disgraceful spoliation.* By way of striking terror into the monks, some of them were enclosed in sacks and thrown at night into the Ebro, whose waters threw them ashore in the morning, to the utter horror of the inhabitants; while Palafox himself, who was at the point of death when the city surrendered, was conducted a close prisoner into France the moment he was able to travel, in defiance of a promise by Lannes to Ric, that he should be permitted to retire wherever he chose.^{1†}

The whole moral as well as physical strength of Aragon having been concentrated in Saragossa, its fall drew after it the immediate submission of the rest of the province. The important fortress of Jaca, commanding the chief pass from that province through the Pyrenees into France, surrendered, with its garrison of two thousand men, a few days after the capital had fallen. Benasque, and some other places of lesser note, followed the example; and before Marshal Lannes was summoned by Napoleon, in the middle of March, to join the Grand Army in Bavaria, the conquest of the whole province, in a military sense, had been so far completed, that nothing remained for Junot, who continued in command in that quarter; and preparations were commenced for an expedition against Valencia.²

While these important operations were destroying all the elements of resistance in Aragon, Catalonia was becoming the theatre of a sanguinary warfare. At the close

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

¹ Ric, 249.
D'Abr. xii.
213, 214.
Tor. ii. 253,
254. South.
ii. 201, 204.

55.

Submission of
the whole of
Aragon.

March 22.

² South. ii.
201. Vict. et
Conq. xviii.
296. Schep-
eler, ii. 226,
227.

* The clergy at first offered a third of the treasure, but this was refused by Lannes, who insisted upon the whole. Marshal Mortier, with a true soldier's honour, refused any part of the plunder.—D'ABRANTES, xii. 221.

† Colonel Napier, after mentioning what is correct, that for a month before the siege terminated, Palafox had been constantly in a bomb-proof cellar, adds (ii. 82) that "there is too much reason to believe that he and others of both sexes lived in a *state of sensuality*, forming a disgusting contrast to the wretchedness which surrounded them." No authority is quoted for this assertion, and the author can discover none in any other historian. On the contrary, Cavallero, the Spanish chief of engineers of the siege, says "Le général-en-chef, qui depuis un mois n'était pas sorti de son caveau, avait été atteint de la terrible *maladie*; il pouvait à peine veiller aux soins de son gouvernement. Il sentit son affaiblissement, et sachant bien que la place ne résisterait pas longtemps lorsque l'ascendant de son caractère ne soutiendrait plus l'énergie des Saragossans, il envoya son aide-de-camp proposer au Duc de Montebello une capitulation."—CAVALLERO, 140. And Toreno adds, "Le général (Palafox) fut emporté mourant de Saragosse, où l'on ne tarda pas à le rapporter à cause de l'extrême faiblesse dans laquelle il se trouvait."—TORENO, *Hist. de la Guerre en Espagne*, ii. 254. Colonel Jones of the British engineers observes, "Granting the palm of skill and science to the besiegers, as seems their due, it cannot be doubted, that while heroic self-devotion, unshaken loyalty, and exalted patriotism are held in estimation among mankind, the name of Palafox, blended with that of Saragossa, will be immortal."—JONES'S *Siege of the Peninsula*, i. 183.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

56.

Operations
in Catalonia
under St Cyr.

Nov. 5.

of the glorious successes of the preceding campaign, when Duhesme, as already noticed, had withdrawn to Barcelona after the failure before Gerona, there remained to the French in that province only that important fortress, garrisoned by eight thousand men, and the citadel of Figueras, by four thousand.* Napoleon, however, had no intention of allowing the eastern gate of Spain to slip from his grasp, and even while the first siege of Gerona was still going forward, he was collecting a fresh corps at Perpignan to relieve those who were shut up in Barcelona, and confided the direction of it to Marshal St Cyr. That accomplished officer took the command in the end of October: Napoleon's parting words to him were brief but characteristic. "Preserve Barcelona for me; if it is lost, I cannot retake it with eighty thousand men." St Cyr crossed the frontier on the 5th November, and advanced towards ROSAS, the siege of which he immediately commenced. His forces consisted at first of thirty thousand men, though they were some months afterwards augmented to forty-eight thousand; but they were a motley group of Italians, Germans, and Swiss, upon some of whom little reliance could be placed, and the marshal felt great discouragement at entering with such a force a mountainous province, where eighty thousand men were said to be in arms. But his forebodings were in a great degree groundless: the patriot force in the province was by no means in the brilliant condition which the Spanish journals represented. To the first burst of patriotic exertion had succeeded the usual depressing reaction when the effort is over, and the necessity for sustained sacrifices and organised armies is felt. Great part of the peasants had returned to their homes; the local juntas were disunited, and had, in a considerable degree, fallen into incapable hands: a large part of the prodigal supplies of England had been embezzled or misapplied by the cupidity of the Spanish agents, to whom they had been consigned; while the English co-operation from Sicily, which was anxiously looked for, had been intercepted, by demonstrations of Murat against Sicily, which had the effect of retaining Sir John Stuart and ten thousand British troops in that island.¹

¹ Nap. ii. 54,
61. St Cyr,
Guerre en
Catalogne,
19, 30. Tor.
ii. 223, 224.
Colling.
Mem. ii. 315.

Rosas, however, was too strong a place to fall without a vigorous resistance, and it was supported by means of defence such as rarely fell to the lot of the Spanish besieged cities. The Excellent, of seventy-four guns, with two bomb-vessels, lay in the bay within cannon-shot of the town. Lord Cochrane came up in his frigate, the Imperieuse, in the middle of the siege; and the fortifications, though old, were regular and respectable. The citadel and the fort of Trinidad, a mile and a quarter distant, were the strongest points, though they were both commanded by the mountains rising above the town, and the garrison consisted of nearly three thousand men. The town, which was hardly fortified, was soon taken; but the citadel and Fort Trinidad made a stout resistance. Heavy guns were at length brought up close to the latter, and a large breach made in the ramparts, upon which the Spanish governor declared the post no longer tenable. But Lord Cochrane, who had just arrived, and to whose ardent spirit such scenes of danger were an actual enjoyment, immediately threw himself into it, and by his courage and resources prolonged a defence which otherwise would have been altogether desperate. Two assaults were repulsed by this intrepid officer and his undaunted seamen with very great slaughter. Meanwhile, however, a practicable breach was effected in the citadel; and a sally, attempted on the night of the 3d, having failed to arrest the progress of the besiegers, the place surrendered with its garrison, still two thousand four hundred strong, on the following day; but Lord Cochrane succeeded in getting the whole garrison of Fort Trinidad in safety on board his vessel.¹

CHAP.
LXI.

1808.

57.
Siege of
Rosas.

Nov. 27.

Nov. 30.

Dec. 3.

¹ St Cyr, 41,
51. Nap. ii.
61, 65. Tor.
ii. 227, 228.

Having his line of retreat and communication in some degree secured by this success, St Cyr moved on to the relief of Barcelona, where General Duhesme, with eight thousand men, was shut up by the Spanish armies, and reduced to great straits for want of provisions and military stores. It has been already mentioned,* that two roads lead from Perpignan to Barcelona; one going through Hostalrich and Gerona, and the other by Rosas and the sea-coast. To avoid the destructive fire of the English cruisers, St

58.
Attempts of
the French
for the relief
of Barcelona.* *Ante*, Chap. liv. § 49.

CHAP.
LXI.1809.
Dec. 15.

Cyr chose the mountain road ; trusting to his resources and skill to discover some path through the hills, which might avoid the fire of the first of these fortresses. On arriving at the point of danger, a shepherd discovered an unguarded path by which Hostalrich might be turned, which was accordingly done, though not without a very harassing opposition from the Spanish light troops. Next day, however, after the circuitous route was over, and he had regained the great road, he encountered the main body of the Spanish army under Vivas and Reding, who had collected fourteen thousand men, half regulars, and half armed peasants, in a strong position at Cardaden, to bar his progress ; while seven thousand men, under Lazan, who had issued from Gerona, hung upon his rear, and Milans, with four thousand men, supported by clouds of Somatenes, or armed peasants, infested the wooded hills on either flank.¹

¹ Tor. ii. 232.
Cabanes, c.
11. St Cyr,
62, 68. Nap.
ii. 71, 72.

59.
Battle of Car-
daden and
defeat of the
Spaniards.

The French force on the spot was fifteen thousand infantry and thirteen hundred horse, while the whole Spanish troops, if collected together, even after providing for the blockade of Barcelona, would have exceeded forty thousand, stationed in a rocky and wooded country, traversed only by narrow defiles ; a situation of all others the most favourable for irregular or half-disciplined troops. Napoleon, in such circumstances, would have raised the blockade of Barcelona, as he did that of Mantua in 1796, and fallen with his whole force on the invader, who could scarcely have escaped destruction ; a result which might have changed the whole fate of the campaign, and possibly of Europe. But Vivas was not Napoleon, and the Spanish generals deemed no such concentration of all their means necessary. Elated with their advantages, they anticipated an easy victory, and were already, in imagination, renewing the triumphs of Baylen. St Cyr, however, soon showed he was very different from Dupont. Uniting his troops into one solid mass, with orders to march firmly on, without firing a shot, he bore down with such vigour on the enemy's centre, that in half an hour they were totally defeated, with the loss of five hundred killed and two thousand wounded, besides all their artillery and ammunition.² Lazan and Milans came up just when the action was

² Nap. ii. 71,
73. Tor. ii.
232, 233. St
Cyr, 62, 72.
Cabanes, p.
3. c. 11.

over, and instantly retired to the shelter of Gerona and the mountains. Arrived two hours sooner, they might have inspired hesitation in the enemy's column, given time for their whole forces to come up, and Cardaden had been a second Baylen.

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

Nothing now remained to prevent the relief of Barcelona by St Cyr, which was effected the day after, and the junction of Duhesme with his troops completed. The Spaniards had been so thoroughly dispersed by their defeat, that the general-in-chief, Vivas, had escaped by a cross mountain-path on board one of the English cruisers; and Reding, the second in command, who was left in command of the fugitives, could with difficulty, two days afterwards, rally ten thousand foot and nine hundred horse to the south of Barcelona. In a few days, however, these troops swelled to twenty thousand men, and took post at Molinos del Rey, where, at daybreak on the 21st, they were attacked by St Cyr with such vigour, that in half an hour they were totally routed, and dispersed in every direction. Such was the swiftness of their flight that few were killed or wounded; but twelve hundred were made prisoners, and all their magazines, stores, ammunition, and artillery, fell into the hands of the victors. Among these were fifty pieces of cannon, three millions of cartridges, sixty thousand pounds of powder, and a magazine containing thirty thousand stand of English arms. The whole open country was, after this great defeat, abandoned by the Spaniards: twelve thousand took refuge in the utmost disorder in Taragona, while five thousand fled to the mountains in the interior, where they conferred the command on Reding, who, undismayed by so many disasters, immediately commenced, with unshaken constancy, the reorganisation of his tumultuary forces. But the discouragement of the province was extreme; and Lord Collingwood, who, from the British fleet off the coast, took a cool survey of the state of affairs, at once saw through the exaggerated accounts of the Spanish authorities, and declared that the elements of resistance in that province were all but dissolved.¹

60.
Defeat of the
Spaniards at
Molinos del
Rey.

Dec. 21.

¹ Lord Collingwood to R. Adair, Feb. 2, 1809. Mem. ii. 315. Nap. ii. 75, 77. Tor. ii. 235, 236. St Cyr, 79, 89. Cab. p. 3, c. 12.

These disasters in Catalonia powerfully accelerated the fall of Saragossa, by extinguishing the only force

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

61.
 Reding's plan
 of a general
 attack on the
 enemy to
 clear the way
 for Saragossa.

from which any relief to its distressed garrison could have been obtained. Thus far, therefore, the successes of St Cyr had been most signal, and the immediate reduction of the province might reasonably have been expected. But that able commander experienced, in his turn, the exhausting effects of this interminable warfare. While he lay at Villa Franca refitting his troops, and forming a park of artillery out of the spoils captured from the enemy, the Spaniards recovered from their consternation, and in several guerilla combats regained in some degree their confidence in engaging the enemy. The Junta at Taragona, elected from the democratic party during the first tumult of alarm and revolt consequent on the defeat of Molinos del Rey, displayed the utmost vigour. Preparations for defence were made on such a scale as precluded all hope of a successful siege; and the confluence of disbanded soldiers who had escaped from the rout, soon raised the force within the walls to twenty thousand men, while an equal force at Gerona and in the intervening mountains debarred the French all access into the hilly region to the westward. But a perception of their strength, notwithstanding all the disasters they had experienced, again proved fatal to the Spaniards; the cry for succour from Saragossa met with a responsive echo in the citizens of Taragona and the breast of the brave Reding, who resolved at all hazards to make an attempt for its relief. The plan which he adopted was ably conceived, and failed only from the indifferent quality of the troops to whose execution it was intrusted. Fifteen thousand men under Castro, who lay outside of Taragona, were to move forward so as to interpose between St Cyr and Barcelona; Reding with ten thousand more, issuing from the town, was to assail the front; while the Somanes, from all quarters, were summoned to descend from their hills to co-operate in the grand attack, from which the total destruction of the enemy was confidently and universally anticipated.¹

¹ Tor. ii. 301, 302. Nap. ii. 84, 85. St Cyr, 94, 102. Cabanes, p. 3, c. 14.

To withstand this formidable concentration of forces, St Cyr had nominally forty-eight thousand men at his disposal, but of these only twenty-three thousand were concentrated under his immediate command at Villa Franca in the Llobregat, the remainder being either

detached to keep up the communications, or sick and wounded in the rear. But such a body, under such a chief, had little to apprehend from the ill-combined efforts of forty thousand Spaniards, in part irregular, and dispersed over a line of fifteen leagues in extent. The moment that St Cyr saw the enemy's forces accumulating round him, he took the judicious resolution to act vigorously on the offensive, and break the enemy's centre before their wings could come up to its relief. With this view, he broke up from Villa Franca with the division of Pino, and joining his generals of divisions, Chabran and Chabot, formed a force in all eleven thousand strong. Early on the morning of the 17th, he commenced a vigorous attack on Castro's troops at Igualada, who, being completely surprised, were speedily put to the rout; and having thus broken through the enemy's line, he left part of his force at that place, and advanced against Reding, who was issuing from Taragona with ten thousand men. Though assailed by superior forces, the brave soul of Reding retreated with reluctance; but he felt the necessity of doing so, and with great difficulty he contrived to collect the greater part of his army, about twelve thousand men, with which he slowly moved, hardly shunning a combat, towards Taragona. On the following morning, however, he encountered St Cyr with fifteen thousand men at Valls, and after a short combat was totally routed. Two thousand men were killed or wounded, the whole artillery taken, and Reding, who fought heroically to the very last, so severely wounded, that he had great difficulty in regaining Taragona, where he soon after died. The loss of the French did not exceed a thousand men. Such was the popular ferment against Reding, when he arrived at that town, that he with difficulty escaped destruction from the populace, though he had discharged his duty better than any man in his army.¹

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

62.

Defeat of the
Spaniards at
Igualada.

Feb. 16.

Feb. 17.

Feb. 24.

¹ Tor. ii. 302,
307. Cabanes,
c. 14, 15.
St Cyr, 112,
126. Nap. ii.
83, 91.

After this decisive victory, the regular war in Catalonia was at an end; and such was the general consternation which it produced, joined to the fall of Saragossa, of which intelligence was received at the same time, that, if St Cyr had pushed on immediately to Tortosa, it too would have fallen into his hands, almost without resist-

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

63.

Languid operations in Catalonia after this success, and retreat of St Cyr to the north of the province.
Feb. 27.

ance. As it was, he made himself master of Reuss, an important commercial city, second only in size and importance to Barcelona, and containing ample resources of every kind. There were taken, also, several thousand sick and wounded, whom St Cyr, with generous, though perhaps not altogether disinterested humanity, as he might hope thereby to transplant the seeds of pestilence into the place, sent into Taragona to Reding; a step which led to a convention, by which it was agreed that the wounded on either side should not be regarded as prisoners, but allowed to remain where they were, and rejoin their respective armies upon their recovery: an admirable arrangement, which it is devoutly to be wished could be extended to all civilised warfare. Want of provisions, however, compelled the French general to leave the neighbourhood of Taragona, of which he was not yet in a condition to undertake the siege; and, approaching the French frontier, he drew near to Vich, in order to make preparations for the siege of Gerona, which he meditated.¹

March 19.

¹ Tor. ii. 207, 209. St Cyr, 127, 140. Cabanes, c. 16.

64.

Unsuccessful attempt on Barcelona.
March 10.

Upon his retreat, the Somatenes, who had never ceased to maintain themselves in the mountains, even after the disaster of Valls, issued in all directions from their retreats, and increasing in audacity with a few partisan successes, not only regained possession of the whole open country to the south of Barcelona, but pushed parties up to the walls of that fortress. The object of this movement was to lend a hand to a strong party within the town, who were conspiring to gain possession of some of the gates, and deliver them to the patriots; and the English squadron, under Lord Collingwood, at the same time approached to co-operate in the enterprise, and cannonaded the works towards the sea. The enterprise failed, however, from the accidental defeat of a body of the Somatenes, who were advancing towards the walls: but such was the alarm inspired by this attempt, that Duhesme took the resolution of compelling all the principal Spanish functionaries to take the oath of allegiance to King Joseph; and upon their courageous refusal, twenty-nine of the principal citizens were forthwith sent prisoners to Monjuich, from which they were soon after despatched by St Cyr into France. But this severity, so

April 10.

foreign to the usual character of that officer, failed in producing any effect. On the contrary, the fortitude of these intrepid magistrates, in enduring captivity rather than abandon their sovereign and oath, spread the flame afresh over the country. Taragona, Lerida, and Tortosa, recovered from their consternation, and took separate measures for their defence; and the guerillas multiplied to such a degree in the mountains, that the French army was soon master of no ground but what itself occupied within the walls of Barcelona, or at Vich, deserted of its inhabitants on their approach, where St Cyr was now seriously engaged with the siege of Gerona.¹

CHAP.
LXL.
1809.

¹ Tor. ii. 307,
312. St Cyr,
127, 159.
Nap. ii. 93,
98. Cabanes,
p. 3, c. 16.

To such a degree were the spirits of the rural population, especially in the mountainous districts, elevated by the retreat of St Cyr from the neighbourhood of Taragona to the foot of the Pyrenees, that Blake, who, on the death of Reding, was appointed captain-general of the three provinces of Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, deemed the opportunity favourable for making a forward movement, to recover his lost ground in the first of these provinces. With this view, he advanced from the mountain region around Lerida, towards the plain of Aragon; and having arrived on the banks of the Cinca, a mountain torrent which descends from the mountains on the Catalonian frontier to the Ebro, he found eight companies of chosen infantry separated from the remainder of the brigade to which they belonged, and succeeded in making the whole prisoners. This success elevated the hopes of the peasantry in the highest degree, and encouraged Blake to attempt the deliverance of Saragossa and the entire expulsion of the French from the province. He was confirmed in the hope that this was practicable by the great reduction of their troops on the Ebro: Bessières' corps having been moved to Valladolid and Old Castile in the beginning of April, to keep up the communications on the great road from Bayonne; and Junot's alone remaining to make head against the Aragonese round Saragossa. Such had been the ravages which the sword of the enemy and the pestilence consequent on the siege had made in the ranks of this corps, that at this time, instead of twenty-four thousand, who crowded round its standards at the commencement of the siege,² it could not muster more than ten

65.
Renewal of
the contest
by Blake in
Aragon.
May 16.

² Suchet's
Mem. i. 10,
12. Tor. iii.
15, 16. Nap.
ii. 97, 98.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

thousand combatants; and they were in such a state of depression from the privations and dangers to which they had been exposed, that little reliance could be placed on them in presence of an enterprising enemy.

Junot, who had been taken ill at this juncture, and had never recovered in the Emperor's estimation his defeat by the

66.
Suchet takes
the command
in Aragon.
His early
history.

English in Portugal, was superseded by SUCHET, a young general of division, hitherto unknown in high command, but whose great exploits and almost unbroken success threw a radiance round the declining years of the empire. Louis Gabriel Suchet was born at Lyons, on the 2d March 1772. His father was a silk manufacturer, who had acquired considerable notice by his discoveries in his profession, and his services in several municipal situations. Young Suchet, in the first instance, received the elements of education at the college of Isle Barbe; and in 1792, at the age of twenty, entered a corps of Lyonesse volunteer cavalry. Soon he was appointed captain, and, after a short interval, chief of battalion in the regiment of Ardeche, with which he took part in the siege of Toulon, and had the good fortune to make prisoner General O'Hara, the English governor of the fortress. After the reduction of that place, he was attached to the army of Italy, and took part in most of the actions of the campaigns of 1794 and 1795, in the Maritime Alps. In the battle of Loano, his regiment captured successively three Austrian standards. Under Napoleon, in the Italian campaign of 1796, he was engaged in the principal combats which took place, especially those at Lodi, Rivoli, Arcola, and Castiglione.¹

¹ Suchet,
Mem. i. 1,
250. Biog.
des Con-
temporains,
187, 189.

He was equally distinguished in the campaign of 1797; and for his brilliant services at the combat in the gorge of Neumark in Styria, was named by Napoleon general of brigade on the field of battle. In 1798, he conducted himself with such ability in the invasion of Switzerland, that he was intrusted with conveying the standards taken from the enemy to Paris; and retained in Helvetia under Brune, instead of being sent into honourable banishment with Napoleon in Egypt. He was afterwards warmly engaged in the campaign of the Alps in 1799; commanded a division under Joubert and Moreau at the battle of Novi; and powerfully contributed, by his

67.
His progress
as a general
of division.

great abilities, to stem the torrent of disaster which there overwhelmed the French arms; and finally brought the allies to a stand on the banks of the Var. After Napoleon's passage of the St Bernard, he pressed with vigour on the retiring Austrians, and took from them above seven thousand prisoners. His division formed part of Lannes' corps in the campaign of Ulm and Austerlitz; and was equally distinguished in that of Jena and Friedland the year following; so that, when the Spanish war broke out, he was already marked out by Napoleon for separate command and great achievement.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

¹ Blog. des.
Cont. i. 89,
91. Suchet's
Mem. i. 250,
430.

Though not of the school of those illustrious chiefs, who, roused to greatness during the struggles of the Republic, afterwards sustained with such lustre the fortunes of the empire, he was distinguished by a capacity which rendered him better qualified than any one of them to attain the summit of military glory. Unlike Murat, Ney, and many other leaders, whose brilliant actions were performed chiefly, if not entirely, when executing the orders of the Emperor, and when surrounded by the halo of his fame, he early showed remarkable ability in separate command, and evinced those resources in difficulty, and that resolution in adversity, which, more than the splendour of success, are the tests of real military greatness. He has been characterised by Napoleon as "the first of his generals; as having grown in capacity, in later times, in a manner which was altogether surprising:"² and after making every allowance for the feelings which must have been roused in the Emperor's mind, by the manner in which he was deserted by many of his other marshals in the period of his adversity, enough remains durably engraved on the tablets of history to prove that Suchet was not undeserving of this magnificent eulogium. Nor were his civil qualities less remarkable than his military. The order and regularity which he introduced into the provinces which his arms had subdued, were justly regarded as in the highest degree admirable; and while they completely relieved the imperial treasury of all the expense of his armaments, they secured for him the gratitude and affection of the inhabitants subject to his rule, even at the very time that he was inflicting the deepest wounds on the fortunes of their country.

68.
His character.

² O'Meara, i.
492. Las
Cases, ii. 11.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

69.

Defeat of the
French at
Alcaniz.

May 23.

The first essay in arms in Spain, however, of this celebrated chief, was unfortunate; and so unpromising was the aspect of affairs, shortly after he entered on the command in Aragon, that nothing but the greatest courage and capacity could have saved the French cause in the province from total ruin. Collecting all the disposable forces which he could muster, to avenge the affront received on the banks of the Cinca, and stop the progress of the enemy in that quarter, Suchet issued from Saragossa, and soon came up with the enemy, who had made himself master of Alcaniz, which he occupied with twelve thousand men. The French general had eight thousand infantry, and seven hundred horse; but the superior discipline of his troops gave him hopes of an easy victory. The action began by an attack by the French on the Mount of Las Horcas, in the centre of the Spanish line, which was assailed by three thousand of their best men; but the assault was repulsed without much difficulty by Blake's infantry and artillery, and Suchet, apprehensive of still greater disasters with troops so seriously discouraged, drew off, after a short combat. Such, however, was the disorder which prevailed, that though they were not pursued, a panic, originating in a false report spread by a drummer in the night, threw the whole army into confusion, and they fled pell-mell into Samper, as if utterly routed. In this disgraceful affair, the French lost nearly a thousand men, the Spaniards not three hundred; and such was the dejected state of the troops, that Suchet was compelled to fall back to Saragossa, where it required all his moral courage to withstand the general clamour for a total evacuation of Aragon.¹

¹ Suchet, l. 16, 21. Tor. iii. 17, 18. Nap. ii. 99, 100.

70.
Approach of
Blake to
Saragossa.

Had the Spanish general been at the head of well-disciplined troops, who could be relied on for operations in the level country, he might, by Suchet's admission, have accomplished the entire expulsion of the French from Aragon; but the event proved that Blake judged wisely in not compromising his army, which had still very little of the consistency of regular soldiers, and was almost destitute of cavalry, in the level plains of the Ebro. For a fortnight after the battle he did nothing but march his troops from one position to another, sedulously endeavouring, during that period, to instruct them in the rudiments

of the military art : and at length he deemed them sufficiently improved to hazard a conflict in the flat country. Suchet, meanwhile, expecting a siege, had been strengthening the Monte Torrero and suburbs of Saragossa, on the southern bank of the Ebro, and strenuously endeavouring to restore the spirit of his soldiers ; but the event did not put the strength of his fortifications to the test. In the middle of June, Blake, at the head of seventeen thousand men, approached Saragossa, and the French general marched out with ten thousand men and twelve guns to meet him. The battle was fought under the walls of the capital : Aragon was the prize of the victor ; but the enthusiasm of the Spaniards, in such a situation, was no match for the discipline and now restored spirit of the French. Blake had imprudently detached five thousand of his best troops, under Areizaga, to Botorrita, with the design, at that time so common with the Spaniards, of surrounding the enemy ; so that, for the shock of battle, he had only twelve thousand men to rely on, and they were decidedly inferior, not merely in the steadiness of the foot-soldiers, but in the number and quality of their cavalry.

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

June 16.

¹ Suchet, l.
20, 30. Tor
iii. 20, 21.
South. ii. 505,
506.

He began the action by extending his left, with the design of outflanking his opponent ; but this movement was quickly checked by a rude charge of Polish lancers, on the flank of the advancing wing, which threw it back in disorder on the second line. Suchet took advantage of this success to move forward his whole centre and right against the enemy, at the same time refusing his left. A precipitous ravine separated the two armies along this part of the line ; the French infantry plunged into the hollow, and, rapidly scaling the opposite heights, boldly advanced against the enemy. They were received, however, with so violent a fire of grape and musketry as drove them back into the shelter of the ravine. Suchet immediately reinforced the attacking troops by two battalions of Polish infantry, who again led on the charge. A violent storm at this instant arose, and concealed the two armies from each other, though separated only by a very short distance ; but during this obscurity the French general was preparing his decisive moment, and no sooner had it cleared away than he made a rapid charge, with

71.
Indecisive
action at
Maria close
to Saragossa.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

two regiments of horse, on the Spanish right, overthrew their cavalry, which were stationed there, and got possession of a bridge in the rear, by which the retreat of the army could alone be effected. The victorious horse now turned fiercely, supported by the infantry of the left, which quickly came up, on the Spanish centre, which nevertheless resisted bravely, and, by the aid of its numerous artillery, for long made good its ground against the combined attacks of the French centre and right. At length, however, some regiments stationed there, pressed at once in front and flank, having given way, the general ordered the whole to retire; and the retreat by the bridge, the only one practicable for the guns, being cut off, they were all taken to the number of twenty. Favoured by the broken ground, however, almost all the troops withdrew in safety, and were rallied at night by Blake, at Botorrita, and reunited to Areizaga, from whom in an evil hour they had been separated. The French lost about eight hundred, the Spaniards a thousand men in this battle; but it decided the fate of Aragon for the remainder of the campaign, and by its results restored the French superiority on both banks of the Ebro.¹

¹ Suchet, ii. 28, 32. Tor. iii. 22, 23. Soult, ii. 306, 307.

72.
Disgraceful
route of the
Spaniards at
Belchite.

It quickly appeared how completely the spirit of the French army had been raised, and that of the Spanish depressed, by this reverse. Next day Blake, reinforced by Areizaga's troops, was much stronger than when he had first fought, while the French were nearly a thousand weaker; and the artillery of the fresh division almost compensated that which had been lost on the preceding day. Blake withdrew with these troops, still fourteen thousand strong, to Belchite; and Suchet having by great exertions collected twelve thousand men, followed and attacked them. The Spanish army was skilfully posted in a strong position among the sloping banks and olive groves which surround that town; Blake harangued his men before the enemy came up, and they promised a vigorous resistance. Nevertheless, hardly had the fire commenced when, a French shell having fallen on a Spanish ammunition-waggon and blown it up, the nearest battalion disbanded and fled: the next immediately followed the example; the con-

tagion ran like wildfire along the whole line, and soon Blake was left alone with his staff and a few officers. Such was the rapidity of their flight that few prisoners were taken, and fewer still were killed or wounded ; but the whole remaining guns, ten in number, with all the caissons, fell into the enemy's hands, and the Spanish army was entirely dispersed. A few broken bands reached Lerida and Mequinenza in Catalonia, but the greater part returned to their homes, and the elements of all regular resistance were extinguished in Aragon for the remainder of the war.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

¹ Tor. iii. 24,
25. Suchet,
i. 34, 38.
South. ii. 508,
510.

St Cyr, meanwhile, was actively preparing for the siege of Gerona. The design of the Emperor was, that Verdier should be intrusted with the direction of the siege, and St Cyr with that of the covering army ; but the former of these generals, who had failed at Saragossa, and was most anxious to retrieve his character by a signal victory in the present instance, was unwilling to begin till assured of success, and urgent that his attacking force, which did not at first exceed ten thousand men, should be reinforced by a division of the general-in-chief's army. This proposal St Cyr at first refused, from a just sense of the risk to which such a small body as would remain to him would be exposed, in the midst of so vast a host of enemies as was in arms in Catalonia. Thereupon ensued an angry correspondence between the two generals, which terminated in Verdier appealing directly to Napoleon, who ordered St Cyr to place three thousand infantry, five hundred horse, and a corps of artillery and sappers at his disposal ; a dislocation of force which reduced the covering army to fifteen thousand men, and raised the besieging one to the same amount.* These reinforcements having left

73.
St Cyr's pre-
parations for
the siege of
Gerona.

* The exact force employed by the besiegers in this memorable siege, and the covering army, was as follows :—

Forces employed in the siege, viz.

Infantry and cavalry,	.	.	.	14,456
Artillery,	.	.	.	1,362
Do. 7th corps,	.	.	.	961
Engineers,	.	.	.	314
Total in the siege,				17,093
Army of observation, cavalry and infantry,	.	.	.	15,732

Total,

32,825

—BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, ii. 650-655.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

¹ St Cyr, 157,
162. Belm.
ii. 494, 498.
Nap. iii. 19.

Verdier without excuse for any longer delay, he resolved forthwith to commence the siege, and the investment was completed by the Spanish outposts being all driven in on the 1st June. But this disagreement between the two generals produced a coldness which essentially injured their mutual co-operation, and protracted, beyond what might otherwise have ensued, the duration of the siege.¹

74.
Unfortunate
supply of
Barcelona
with stores
by sea.

May 7.

An untoward event occurred at this time, even on the element on which Great Britain had hitherto been victorious, which had a most calamitous effect on the war in Catalonia. Notwithstanding the extreme vigilance and admirable arrangements of Lord Collingwood, Admiral Cosmao, with a valuable convoy, succeeded in eluding the English blockading squadron, and escaping from Toulon, from whence he made straight for Barcelona, into which he threw his supplies, and got back without sustaining any serious injury. The garrison of that important fortress, from being in a state of extreme want, especially of stores and ammunition, were, by this seasonable reinforcement, put in a state of such affluence, that they were not merely in a condition to sustain a long siege, but could spare ample supplies of stores of all kinds to the besieging force at Gerona, which arrived safe there under the protection of six of St Cyr's battalions, detached for that purpose from the covering force; and by relieving the general-in-chief of all anxiety in regard to Barcelona, enabled him to give his undivided attention to the important duty with which he was more immediately connected.²

² St Cyr, 159,
160. Tor. iii.
78.

75.
Preparations
of the
besieged for
their defence.

"Whoever speaks of a capitulation or surrender, shall be instantly put to death." Such were the words of an order of the day, on the 5th May, with which Alvarez, governor of Gerona, announced his resolution to hold out to the last extremity. Nor did the spirit of the garrison and inhabitants fall short of these heroic sentiments. Animated by the recollection of their former glorious resistance, the citizens had taken the most energetic steps to second the efforts of the regular soldiers; and had formed a corps, composed of the whole male population, without distinction of rank or age, whose duty was to support, by every possible means, the defence of the gar-

rison. There, too, as at Saragossa, the women, even of rank and station, were formed into companies to bear away and tend the wounded; and, at every breath of air, their ribbons were seen to float amidst the bayonets of the soldiers. The patron saint of the town, St Narcissus, was declared generalissimo of the armies, and the utmost efforts were made to elevate the courage of the besieged, by the belief that his celestial aid would extend the same protection to the town which he had already shown in the former siege, and as had been displayed five hundred years before, when Philip the Bold, who besieged the place, had, according to the old chronicles, had his army destroyed by a miraculous cloud of locusts. Nor were more worldly means of defence neglected: the garrison of three thousand men was animated with the best spirit; the ramparts were plentifully lined with artillery, and provisions for a siege of many months' duration already provided.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

The town stands on a steep declivity, rising up from the right bank of the Ter, which terminates in a bluff precipice, on which are situated several forts which constitute the real strength of the place. The upper town is only defended by a single wall, fifteen feet high; the lower, which is more exposed, has the protection of a rampart, wet ditch, and outworks. The crest of the hill is occupied by three forts, called the Capucines; and on the north, the town is commanded by a fort called Monjuich, standing on a rocky eminence, and separated from it by the valley of Galligau. This fort, which had the advantage of bomb-proof casemates, cisterns, and magazines, was tolerably fortified, and was garrisoned by nine hundred brave men, resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity; while the rocky nature of the ground round both it and the forts of the Capucines, rendered the formation of approaches a matter of great labour and difficulty.²

¹ Tor. iii. 77.
Belm. ii. 497,
498. St Cyr,
181.

76.
Description
of Gerona.

² Belm. ii.
497, 501.
Nap. ii. 23,
24. Tor. iii.
77, 78. St
Cyr, 181, 182.

The first serious attack of the enemy was directed against Monjuich, and the towers which formed its outworks were carried by assault on the 19th June. About the same time, a convoy of a thousand cattle, destined for the garrison, fell into the hands of the French; and the near approach of St Cyr with his covering force,

77.
Progress of
the siege.
June 19.

CHAP.
LXI.

1808.

July 4.

July 8.

¹ Tor. iii. 82,
84. Belmas,
ii. 501, 536.
Jones, i. 257.
Nap. ii. 25,
26. St Cyr,
190, 194.

78.
Fall of
Monjuich,
and obstinate
conflicts of
which it was
the theatre.
Aug. 12.

raised the troops which might be employed in the siege to thirty thousand men. After this, the breaching batteries continued to thunder incessantly on the walls of the fort for a fortnight; and a large breach having been at length effected, an assault was attempted early in July, which was repulsed with severe loss. Three days afterwards, and when the breach had been enlarged, and the adjoining defences ruined by the incessant fire of sixty pieces of cannon, the attack was again renewed with a very large force; but although the French, in close column, twice returned to the assault with great courage, they were on both occasions repulsed. The Spaniards had so barricaded the summit of the breach, that it was impossible to surmount the obstacles, and the flanking fire of a half-moon and ravelin on either side tore the assailants in pieces, and finally drove them back with the loss of a thousand killed and wounded. Taught, by this bloody repulse, the quality of the enemy with whom he had to deal, St Cyr now confined himself to the surer operations of sap and mine, and a month was consumed in that subterraneous warfare, without any material progress being made in the reduction of the place.^{1*}

Meanwhile the French general carried by storm Palamos, a small town built on a rocky promontory running into the sea, a day's march from Gerona, from which the besieged had occasionally derived supplies. The detachment necessary for this enterprise and the accumulation of force around Gerona, having reduced the covering army on the side of Hostalrich and Barcelona to eight thousand men, the Spanish generals, notwithstanding their numerous defeats, were tempted to try the relief of the place. While the preparations for this purpose were going on under the direction of Blake, the mining operations and fire of the besiegers against Monjuich continued with such violence, that its buildings and defences were entirely ruined, and the fort being no longer tenable, it was evacuated in the middle of August, and the garrison withdrawn into the town. The defence of this external post was of sinister augury for the

* "A drummer had been placed near the breach to beat the alarm when a shell was approaching. As he was doing so, a cannon-shot carried off part of his thigh, and lacerated his knee in a dreadful manner. When the attendants, however, approached to convey him to the hospital, he said, 'No! though wounded in the leg, I have still arms left to beat the drum, and warn my friends of the approach of bombs.'"—Tosno, 384.

ultimate issue of their undertaking to the besiegers; for though garrisoned only by nine hundred men, it had withstood thirty-seven days of open trenches, two assaults, had sustained the discharge of twenty-three thousand cannon-shot, and two thousand bombs, and had cost the assailants three thousand men. Hardly one of the garrison was unhurt; five hundred had been killed or seriously wounded. Elated with this success, however, Verdier boasted in his public despatches that Gerona could not now hold out fifteen days: but in making this assertion, he underrated both the resolution of the besieged and the resources of the Spaniards for the relief of the place.¹

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

¹ Nap. ii. 33,
35. Tor. iii.
85, 88.
Belm. ii. 541,
566.

Although the lower town was commanded in many parts by the fire from Monjuich and the forts of the Capucines, and its defences on that side consisted only of an old weak wall; yet the governor and inhabitants continued to make the most resolute defence, and every inch of ground which the besiegers gained, was won only by hard fighting and profuse bloodshed. Meanwhile, Blake having made his arrangements for the relief of the town, the attempt was made, and with perfect success, on the 1st of September. Claros and Rovira, two Somatene chiefs, had previously excited great alarm on the French frontier, by their attack on a convoy coming up to the relief of Figueras, which was constantly blockaded by the Miquelets; and Blake, having concerted measures with them, drew near with nine thousand men from the side of Hostalrich, while four thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry, under General Conde, with a convoy of two thousand beasts of burden, each laden with flour, unknown to the enemy, approached from the same direction, and Claros and Rovira threatened the besiegers' posts on the north, from the side of Figueras. With such skill were these operations conducted, that the enemy found himself assailed in every quarter except that by which the convoy was to enter; and St Cyr, conceiving that the raising of the siege, not the revictualing of the town, was intended, drew off his troops to the points menaced, so completely that the convoy entered safe, amidst the transports of the inhabitants, with hardly any fighting; and Conde, having left three thousand of his men to reinforce the garrison,² withdrew in safety with the remainder

79.
Efforts of the
Spaniards for
its relief,
which are
successful.
Sept. 1.

² Tor. iii. 91,
92. Nap. ii.
36, 38. Belm.
ii. 568, 588,
St Cyr, 210,
226.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

80.
Heroic con-
stancy of the
besieged.
Sept. 11.

to Hostalrich, whither Blake soon after retired with the bulk of his forces.

To have relieved the besieged in presence of fifteen thousand disposable French troops, headed by such a general as St Cyr, with soldiers discouraged by repeated defeats, was no small subject of congratulation to the Spaniards, and reflected great honour on the perseverance and skill of Blake. But it speedily appeared that the supplies thus received, without having given them the means of permanent deliverance, had only prolonged for an additional period the duration of their sufferings. The supply of provisions introduced, taking into view the number of extra mouths brought along with them, did not exceed a fortnight's consumption; and the spirits of the besieged, which had been elevated to an extraordinary degree by the first appearance of succour, and anticipated from it a total deliverance, were proportionally depressed when they beheld the friendly standards on all sides recede from view, and the French, without being disturbed, resume their menacing positions round the city. The fire of the breaching batteries was recommenced on the 11th September with redoubled fury; a sortie to destroy the most advanced works of the besiegers, though attended at first with some success, was finally repulsed with loss; and three enormous breaches having been made in the walls, a general assault was made a few days after, and led to a struggle supported on both sides with unparalleled resolution.¹

¹ Belm. ii.
596, 600.
Tor. ii. 93,
94. St Cyr,
226, 252.

81.
Repulse of
the grand
assault.
Sept. 19.

Alvarez had skilfully prepared all the means, not only of defence, but of succouring the wounded, bringing up supplies to the points of danger, and relieving with fresh troops the defenders of the breaches; but, able as were his previous dispositions, and heroically as he discharged, on that eventful crisis, all the duties of a commander and common soldier, the town must have sunk under the fury of the assault, if his efforts had not been seconded by the whole population. At the sound of the drums, which beat in all the streets, and the mournful clang of the tocsin which rang in the churches, the whole inhabitants poured forth. Men and women, monks and children, hastened with perfect regularity, without either trepidation or confusion, to the posts assigned them; and, amidst

the fire of two hundred pieces of artillery, calmly awaited death in the service of their country. Never was a more sublime spectacle beheld in modern times. Silently they took up their stations; neither shouts nor cries were heard, but the bright expression of every eye revealed the sacred ardour by which the whole were animated. At half-past four in the afternoon, three massy columns advanced to the breaches, while a terrific fire of artillery swept the ramparts by which they were flanked, now almost entirely denuded of their parapets. Three times did the assailants, animated with heroic courage, mount to the summit of the breaches, and three times were they repulsed by the invincible firmness of the garrison. Such was the fury with which the defenders were animated, that often finding the discharge of fire-arms too slow a method of defence, they threw down their muskets, and lifting up great stones with both hands, hurled them down upon the enemy. At length, after a hard struggle of three hours' duration, the assailants drew off, leaving the breaches covered with their slain, and weakened by the fall of sixteen hundred men.¹

The dreadful loss sustained in these bloody assaults, and the undaunted countenance of the garrison, induced St Cyr after this to convert the siege into a blockade, and trust for the final reduction of the place to the certain effect of famine, and the continued fire of artillery which would ruin every habitation which it contained. With this view, the lines round the town were drawn still closer than before, and every effort was made to exclude the casual introduction of small bodies of troops, which had occasionally taken place, notwithstanding all the vigilance of the besiegers, since the commencement of the siege. Blake, on the other hand, being sensible that the garrison was reduced to great straits from want of provisions, assembled fourteen thousand men, and made a second attempt for its relief. Meanwhile, the besiegers were suffering almost as much from want of provisions as the besieged; the Somatenes on all the neighbouring hills rendering the supply of the army extremely hazardous, and the vigilance of Lord Collingwood having intercepted and destroyed the large squadron which sailed from Toulon for their relief. But the failure of Blake's attempt

CHAP.
LXI.
1809.

1 St Cyr,
252, 254.
Nap. ii. 45.
Tor. iii. 94.
96. Belm.
ii. 600, 610.

82.
Extreme distress of the
besieged from
want of
provisions.

CHAP.
LXI.1800.
Sept. 26.

to throw any effectual supplies into the place, relieved the one party as much as it depressed the other. St Cyr, more on his guard on this occasion, interposed with the bulk of his covering force between the besiegers' lines and the quarter from which the convoy was approaching. The result was that the whole, consisting of two thousand beasts of burden, with the exception of a hundred and seventy which penetrated with O'Donnell at the head of a thousand men into the town, fell into the enemy's hands, while Blake was driven off with the loss of three thousand of his best troops. This was a fatal blow to Gerona: plenty, thereafter, reigned in the one camp, as much as want raged in the beleaguered fortress. Secure within his impregnable lines, St Cyr, as he has himself told us, waited quietly till time, fever, and famine should subdue the resistance of the enemy.¹

83.
Recall of St
Cyr, and dis-
tress of the
place.
Oct. 18.

He was not permitted, however, himself to reap the fruit of this prudent but inglorious policy. The slow progress of the siege, and the frequent repulses of the assaults, were little suited to the impatient mind of Napoleon, who recalled St Cyr, and sent Marshal Augereau to assume the command. On the same day on which he arrived, O'Donnell, with his brave band, fearful of augmenting the distress of the besieged by additional mouths, again made his way out of the place, and reached Blake's quarters in safety. But the failure of provisions and supplies of all sorts was now daily making it more apparent that the fall of this heroic town could not much longer be averted. The hospitals were crowded with sick and wounded; beds, attendants, and medicines, were wanting; a malignant fever, as at Saragossa, had broken out, and was daily carrying off great numbers, both of the soldiers and citizens; the magazines of corn and flour were almost exhausted, and the inhabitants were seeking the miserable resource of inferior animals. The capture of a third great convoy collected at Hostalrich for the relief of the place, and the defeat of O'Donnell's force, which formed its escort, both deprived the besieged of present relief, and supplied the besiegers in plenty with all sorts of provisions;² while the transference of a large portion of Junot's corps from Aragon to the beleaguering

¹ Belm. II.
612, 630.
St Cyr, 270,
272. Tor. III.
99, 104.

force, and the arrival of powerful reinforcements from France, cut off all hopes of ultimate deliverance.

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

Still the heroic governor, and his worthy companions in arms, continued their resistance for two months longer, with hopeless but unsubdued resolution. All offers of capitulation were sternly rejected; and it was not till provisions of all sorts were entirely exhausted, and the inhabitants, almost dying of famine, and having consumed every vestige of food in the city, had been reduced to the deplorable and unparalleled necessity of feeding on their own hair, that the word capitulation was for the first time pronounced in the city. Even in that woful extremity, and when seven large breaches were guarded by detachments of soldiers hardly able to bear the weight of their own arms, and more resembling ghosts than living men, Augereau did not venture to attempt an assault. But Alvarez, whom no necessity, however cruel, could induce to think of a surrender, was seized, like Palafox, with the prevailing fever, and soon reduced to the last extremity; and his successor, Bolivar, felt the necessity of entering into negotiations for the surrender of the place. Augereau, too happy to gain possession of it on any conditions, willingly granted honourable terms to the besieged; and on the 12th December, Gerona opened its gates to the conqueror. When the French marched in, they gazed with amazement on the proofs which were every where presented of the devoted courage of the garrison and inhabitants. The town was little better than a heap of ruins; the streets, unpaved and intersected in all quarters by barricades, were lined by half-destroyed edifices; unburied bodies lying about in all directions, putrid pools yet stained with blood, spread a pestilential air around; the survivors of the inhabitants, pale and emaciated, resembled spectres haunting a city of the dead. Almost all the heads of families had fallen; the women with child had, without exception, perished; numbers of infants at the breast had starved from want of nourishment. Nine thousand persons had died during the siege within its walls in the service of their country, of whom four thousand were citizens, being nearly a third part of their whole number.¹

84.
Capitulation
of the town,
and its fearful
state.

Dec. 12.

¹ Tor. iii.
89, 104. St
Cyr, 270, 274.
Belm. ii. 612.
642. Nap. ii.
46, 49.

Carnot has observed that the siege even of the greatest

CHAP.
LXI.

1809.

85.
Extraordi-
nary nature
of its
defence.

fortresses in modern times has seldom been prolonged beyond six weeks; and yet Gerona, with its feeble ramparts, held out seven months, of which six and a half were of open trenches. The besiegers directed against the place the fire of forty batteries, armed by above a hundred and eighty pieces of cannon, from which were thrown into the town eighty thousand cannon-balls and twenty thousand bombs. The greater part of the guns of the, besiegers were rendered useless by constant discharges, or dismounted by the fire of the town: fifteen thousand men had perished by the sword or disease around its walls. Four thousand three hundred men were made prisoners in the town, including its heroic governor, Alvarez, then in the last stage of fever. With brutal harshness, Augereau, without regard to his noble defence or lamentable condition, had him shut up alone in a dungeon of Figueras, where he soon after died, under circumstances which made the Spaniards suspect assassination; although his state of debility probably rendered that last act of atrocity unnecessary. But, as Colonel Napier, with the true spirit of a soldier, observes, "As long as virtue and courage are esteemed in the world, his name will be held in veneration; and if Augereau forgot what was due to this gallant Spaniard's merit, posterity will not forget to do justice to both."¹

¹ Nap. ii. 50.
Tor. iii. 103,
104. Belm.
ii. 645, 648.

86.
Termination
of the cam-
paign in
Catalonia,
and aspect of
affairs at that
period in that
quarter.

The fall of Gerona terminated the campaign in Aragon and Catalonia. The Córtes, assembled at Seville, in just commemoration of the unparalleled constancy displayed by the besieged both in that town and Saragossa, passed decrees awarding extraordinary honours to the inhabitants and garrisons of both, and to the illustrious chiefs, Palafox and Alvarez, by whom their defence had been conducted; and after the peace, Castanos, then governor-general of Catalonia, repaired to Figueras, and constructed an appropriate monument to the last of these heroes in the dungeon where he had expired. But these successes gave the enemy a firm footing both in Aragon and Catalonia; and the resistance in those provinces was now reduced to a desultory guerilla warfare in the mountains, and the siege of the remaining strongholds in the latter province, still in the hands of the Spaniards. The whole fortresses of Aragon had fallen

into the hands of the enemy: and although Taragona, Lerida, Tortosa, and the other fortified cities of Catalonia, were still in the possession of the patriots, yet it soon became painfully apparent that their means of regular resistance in the field were exhausted. Shortly after the fall of Gerona, Augereau, having sent all the monks of the town off as prisoners of war into France, marched against the irregular mass in front of Hostalrich, which had so long disquieted the operations of the besiegers. Two brigades sufficed to defeat six thousand of them, on the ridge of La Jonquieris: Souham dispersed the bands of Dec. 18. Rosta and Claros at Olot and Campredon, and got possession of Ripoll, their principal manufactory of arms. At Dec. 25. the same time, Pino, with his Italian division, routed a Dec. 26. corps of four thousand mountaineers; while Augereau himself, having, by these successes, re-established his communications with France, marched against the principal Spanish army, under Blake, whom he worsted at Dec. 28. the Col-di-Sespina, and drove towards Taragona; which enabled him to draw his forces around Hostalrich, and commence the blockade of that fortress. Suchet, at the same time, was making preparations for the sieges of ¹ Belm. II. Taragona and Lerida; so that every thing announced ^{643, 649,} South. IV. vigorous and decisive operations in that quarter of the Peninsula, early in the ensuing year.¹

CHAPTER LXII.

CAMPAIGN OF THE DOURO AND TALAVERA.

CHAP.
LXII.
 1809.
 1.
 State of
 Galicia and
 Asturias after
 the embarka-
 tion of the
 British at
 Corunna.

WHILE Aragon and Catalonia were the theatre of these memorable events, Soult and Ney, in Galicia, were slowly reaping the fruit of their successful operations, which had terminated in the expulsion of the English from the north of Spain. Both parties for a time appeared exhausted: the Spaniards, bent to the earth by the flight of their allies and the loss of Corunna and Ferrol, the two strongest and most important places on the northern coast of the Peninsula, were sunk in the deepest affliction, and for a considerable time gave hardly any signs of life; while the French, almost equally exhausted, rested without any attempt at further exertion, in the important fortresses which they had conquered. Romana alone, with the remnant of Blake's army, which had been routed at Reynosa, still maintained, in the recesses of the mountains, the standard of independence; but his forces were reduced to six or eight thousand men, without either cannon, stores, or resources of any kind. The soldiers were destitute of shoes, almost of clothes, and nothing but the devoted patriotism of their chief, and the extraordinary tenacity of the men, preserved the country from total subjugation. Fearful of permitting even such a wasted band to keep the field, Soult moved a division against him. But the brave Spaniard retreated by Orense to the rugged mountains on the Portuguese frontier; and having thus got beyond the reach of his pursuers, resolved to maintain himself, like Pelayo in the days of the Moors,¹ in the inaccessible ridges of his

Feb. 3.
¹ Tor. ii. 205.
 South. ii. 224.

country, and await the issue of events, to reappear again in the field in its support.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

2.

Advance of
Sir R. Wil-
son to Rod-
rigo, and re-
turn of Joseph
to Madrid.

Meanwhile, Sir Robert Wilson, with the Portuguese levies which he had trained and disciplined, advanced beyond the Spanish frontier, and took post near Ciudad Rodrigo, in Leon. When the news of Sir John Moore's embarkation arrived, he sent his guns, as a measure of precaution, to Abrantes in the rear, but remained himself in the neighbourhood of that fortress, where he was soon joined by Don Carlos d'Espana, a Spanish chief, with a few followers. Though their united force was too weak to undertake any operation of importance, yet, by merely remaining where they were, and showing a bold front at a time of such disaster, they did good service, and kept the spirits of the province from sinking under its misfortunes. And truly the aid of such chivalrous spirits as this gallant officer, to whom scenes of danger were a source of pleasure, was necessary, to prevent the cause of Spanish independence from appearing altogether hopeless, amidst the defection of many who should have taken the lead in its support. Addresses, as already mentioned, had been forwarded to Joseph Buonaparte at Valladolid, from all the incorporations and influential bodies at Madrid, inviting him to return to the capital and resume the reins of government: registers had been opened in different parts of the city, for those citizens to inscribe their names who were favourable to his government; and, in a few days, thirty thousand signatures, chiefly of the more opulent classes, had been inscribed on the lists. In obedience to these flattering invitations, the intrusive King had entered the capital with great pomp, amidst the discharge of a hundred pieces of cannon, and numerous, if not heartfelt, demonstrations of public satisfaction: a memorable example of the effect of the acquisition of wealth, and the enjoyment of luxury, in enervating the minds of their possessors; and of the difference between the patriotic energy of those classes who, having little to lose, yield to ardent sentiments without reflection, and those in whom the suggestions of interest, or the habits of indulgence, have stifled the generous emotions of our nature.¹

¹ South. II.
24, 33. Nel-
lerto, II. 287.
301. Pièces
Just.

Meanwhile Napoleon, whose ardent mind could as

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

3.

Preparations
for the inva-
sion of Por-
tugal by
Sout and
Victor.

little endure repose in any of his lieutenants as in himself, sent orders to Soult, while he still lay with the bulk of his corps at Ferrol, to prepare immediately for the invasion of Portugal. The plan for this purpose was formed by the Emperor on a grand scale, and apparently promised certain success. Soult himself was to move, with four divisions of infantry and ten regiments of cavalry, numbering in all twenty-five thousand combatants present with the eagles, direct upon Oporto: on the road he was to be joined by Loison, with five thousand more. Lapisse, with nine thousand, was to menace the country from the side of Leon; while Victor, with thirty thousand, who was stationed at Merida, on the eastern frontier of the kingdom, was to co-operate from the side of Estremadura, and take a part in the combined movement on Lisbon. Thus sixty thousand men, from different quarters, were to invade Portugal, in which at that time there were not more than fourteen thousand British and an equal number of native troops, all in a state of extreme discouragement from the reverses in Spain, and the embarkation of the army from the shores of Galicia. So little did Napoleon anticipate any serious resistance in this undertaking, and so deeply was the future career of the British in the Peninsula shrouded from his view, that he calculated that on the 5th February his troops would be at Oporto, and on the 16th before Lisbon. The easy reduction of that capital he confidently anticipated; and after driving the English into the sea, Soult was to co-operate in an expedition against Andalusia, and follow the path Dupont had trod to the shores of the Guadalquivir. After reading a despatch from Soult, giving an account of his operations in Galicia and the battle of Corunna, he said, "Every thing proceeds well: Romana cannot exist a fortnight longer: the English will never make a second effort: in three months the war will be at an end. Spain may be a La Vendée; but I have tranquillised La Vendée. The Romans conquered its inhabitants, the Moors conquered them, and they are not nearly so fine a people now as they were then. I will settle the government firmly; conciliate the nobles, and cut down the people with grape-shot.¹ They say the country is against me; but

Tor. ii. 284.
265. Jones, i.
166. Nap. ii.
164, 165.
Belm. ii. No.
24. Pièces
Just.

there is no longer a population there; Spain is, in most places, a solitude without five men to a square league. 'I will let them see what a first-rate power can effect.'

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

Soult commenced his march from Vigo, on the coast of Galicia, in the beginning of February, and reached Tuy, on the shores of the Minho, on the 10th of the same month. The river being deep and rapid, and at that season of the year a raging flood, it was no easy matter to pass it in presence of several thousand Portuguese ordenanzas, who occupied the opposite bank, which in that quarter formed the frontier of their country. At length a small flotilla, which was secretly prepared in the tributary stream of the Tamega, was sent down during the night, and ferried three hundred soldiers over to the Portuguese shore; but they were instantly attacked at daybreak by three thousand of the armed bands, the men already landed made prisoners, and the remainder driven back to the opposite bank. This check obliged Soult to ascend the banks of the river, through horrible roads, to Orense, in order to take advantage of the bridge there over the Minho; and his advanced guard reached that town in time to secure that important passage before it could be destroyed. Still this gallant resistance of the Portuguese on their frontier was attended with important effects; for such was the fatigue of his troops, that the French general was unable to resume his march for Oporto till the 4th March, which rendered it impossible for him to reach Lisbon before the English reinforcements, under Mackenzie and Sherbrooke, had arrived there in the beginning of April. Hardly had he left Orense, taking the road for Chaves and Oporto, when his advanced guard overtook the rearguard of Romana, which was withdrawing before him, at Monterey, and defeated it with the loss of nearly a thousand killed and wounded, and as many prisoners. Romana, upon this, separated himself from the Portuguese general Silveira, with whom he had been endeavouring to concert operations, and defiled by mountain paths to Braganza, from whence he made for the valley of the Sil, and the direction of Asturias;¹ while the Portuguese militia, now left to their own resources, were driven back, fighting all the way, to Chaves, a fortified town, which was immediately invested,

4
Soult's march
through
Galicia to-
wards Oporto.

Feb. 15.

Feb. 17.

Feb. 20.

March 4.

March 6.

1 Operations
de M. Soult,
50, 115. Nap.
ii. 180, 187.
Belm. i. 61,
62. South. ii.
214, 231.

**CHAP.
LXII.**

1809.

5.
And through
Tras-os-
Montes.
March 17.

March 20.

and capitulated on the 13th, with fifty pieces of cannon and ramparts in tolerable repair: an acquisition of great importance, as it gave the invaders a solid footing within the Portuguese frontier.

Having established the depot of his army, and left his heavy artillery, sick, and wounded, as well as stragglers, who were very numerous, in this stronghold, Soult set out on the 17th for Oporto, taking the rout of Tras-os-Montes, in preference to that of Entre-Douro-e-Minho, in consequence of the number of deep and difficult streams which required to be crossed in the latter province. The road through the romantic and beautiful mountains of the upper province, however, passed through a series of defiles equal to any in Europe in strength and intricacy; and the French troops were not long in experiencing the resources which the ancient military institutions of the kingdom offered for resistance to an invading army. At every step they met with an incessant and harassing opposition, which both retarded their march and fatigued the soldiers; and it was not till the 20th that they arrived in sight of Braga, which was occupied by General Freire, with two thousand regular troops and twenty thousand ordenanzas, of whom, however, only five thousand were armed with muskets, the remainder being a confused rabble with pikes, clubs, or pruning-hooks. Justly distrustful of such a tumultuary body in presence of an equal number of French soldiers, Freire evacuated Braga, and was taking the road for Oporto, when the multitude, suspecting treachery, mutinied, put him to death, and forced the command on General Eben, a Hanoverian officer in the Portuguese service, who had gained their confidence by his activity in organising the new levies. Eben, thus forced to fight, made the best dispositions which the circumstances would admit; but it speedily appeared how totally unfit such an undisciplined body was to make head against the imperial veterans. A well-concerted attack from three French divisions soon proved successful: the Portuguese, utterly routed, fled on all sides, having lost all their artillery, and above three thousand men slain on the spot. So exasperated were the victors at some cruelties exercised by the peasants on their stragglers,¹ that they took few

¹ Operations
de M. Soult,
115, 142.
Belm. I. 63,
64. Tor. II.
339, 340.
Nap. II. 196,
198.

prisoners ; and such was the reciprocal feeling of hatred excited in the breasts of the natives, that when the French entered Braga after their victory, they found it totally deserted by its inhabitants.

No force now existed in the northern provinces to arrest the progress of the invaders ; for though Silveira, at the head of ten thousand men, still kept his footing in the mountains on the eastern frontier, yet he was rather in their rear, and it was not to be expected that his irregular force could interpose any serious obstacles in the way of the farther advance towards the Douro. Thither, accordingly, Marshal Soult bent his steps, after resting his troops some days at Braga ; and on the 28th he appeared on the north bank of that river, before OPORTO. The means of defence there were very considerable, and the inhabitants were animated with the most unbounded hatred of the French, both from the experience of former wrongs and recent injuries. But regular soldiers and arrangements were wanting to turn to proper account the ardent passions and fervent zeal of the people. The Bishop of Oporto was at the head of affairs ; a warlike and courageous prelate, whose patriotic zeal, not less than his political ambition, had shone forth conspicuous since the first French invasion of the Peninsula. A series of field-works, dignified with the name of an intrenched camp, had been thrown up on the north of the city, which were armed by one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon ; and fifteen hundred regular troops had been collected as a reserve to support any part of the line which might require assistance. The people were animated with the most enthusiastic spirit ; all night the tocsin sounded from the churches, and at daybreak on the 29th, being Good-Friday, a tumultuary body of twenty-five thousand men hurried forth and occupied the redoubts.¹

But such a crowd of citizens, even though animated by an ardent spirit, is seldom capable of withstanding, except behind regular ramparts, the assault of disciplined soldiers. Having completed his arrangements, and distracted the enemy's attention by demonstrations against their flanks, Soult bore down with the weight of his force against their centre. Two redoubts,

CHAP.

LXII.

1809.

6.
Preparations
for the de-
fence of
Oporto.
March 29.

¹ Belm. i. 63,
64. Tor. ii.
340. Jones, i.
194. Nap.
i. 201, 207.

7.
Bloody action
before that
town, which
is stormed.
March 29.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

which flanked the main road in that quarter, were carried after a stout resistance ; and the fire from thence having raked great part of the remainder of the Portuguese line, a general panic took place, and the whole rushed in wild confusion into the town. The French cavalry instantly charged the flying mass, now incapable of opposing any resistance, through the city ; the horsemen galloped, cutting them down in vast numbers, right through the streets, to the edge of the Douro ; such was the multitude which thronged the bridge that part of it sank under the weight, and hundreds were precipitated into the river ; but, even after this catastrophe, the crowd from behind pressed on to avoid the bloody sabres of the imperial dragoons, and forced those in front headlong into the waves. Boats, hastily collected to receive the wretched throng, were as quickly sunk by the fire of the French artillery, which had now come down to the water's edge, and discharged grape incessantly on the mass in the stream. The river was covered with dead bodies, among which numbers of those of women and children were to be seen : and before the French made themselves masters of the town, four thousand corpses encumbered the banks of the Douro. Even in this extremity, however, some traces of the ancient Portuguese valour were to be discerned ; and a body of two hundred devoted patriots, who had taken refuge in one of the neighbouring churches of the city, resolutely refused all proposals of surrender, and were slain to the last man. When the French soldiers were fairly masters of the town, their passions were strongly excited, in addition to the usual fury of an assault, by the cruelties which had been exercised by the inhabitants on some of the prisoners who had fallen into their hands : and although Marshal Soult exerted himself to the utmost to arrest the disorders, tranquillity was not restored until about eight thousand Portuguese had fallen, and the city had undergone all the horrors which are usually the fate of places taken by storm.¹

¹ Tor. ii. 340,
341. Nap.
201, 207.
Belm. i. 63,
64. South. iii.
245, 250.
Jones, i. 194,
195.

Whilst Soult was thus, amidst blood and carnage, forcing a hateful domination upon the northern provinces of Portugal, Marshal Ney, who had been left in charge of Galicia and Asturias, was maintaining a harass-

ing and desultory warfare with the undaunted mountaineers of those rugged provinces. The Marquis Romana, after his check at Monterey already noticed, had defiled in the direction of Pont Ferrada, on the great road from Benevente to Corunna; and having accidentally discovered a French twelve-pounder, and some ammunition and balls, in a hermitage near Villa Franca, he took advantage of it to commence an attack upon the castle of that town, garrisoned by a French battalion, and after a siege of seven days forced it to capitulate. Eight hundred prisoners were taken on this occasion—a success which, loudly magnified by common rumour, so elevated the spirits of the Spaniards in these mountainous regions, that, in less than a fortnight, twenty thousand men were assembled round Romana's standards. Upon this, Ney, who deemed it high time to put a stop to this alarming progress, marched out of Corunna at the head of ten thousand men, with the design of giving battle to the Spanish general wherever he could find him. He advanced to Lugo, the point where the chief roads of the country intersect each other; but Romana, who had no intention of hazarding his raw troops, who were totally destitute of artillery or cavalry, in a general action with the French veterans, suddenly shifted his quarters, and leaving Galicia with part of his troops, entered Asturias with the bulk of his forces, with the design of rousing the population and animating the resistance of that province. Ney followed upon his footsteps, and marched across the mountains to Oviedo, the capital of the latter province. King Joseph, who deemed it of the highest importance to stifle in the outset the formidable insurrection which, on the appearance of Romana, broke out in that quarter, on account of its vicinity to the great line of communication with France, directed at the same time against it considerable forces from other quarters.¹

Kellerman, who came up from Leon with nine thousand men, crossed the lofty ridge of Pajares a few days after, and having put to flight a corps of two thousand Spaniards who attempted to dispute the passage, descended to Pola, in the neighbourhood of Oviedo; while, in three days afterwards, Bonnet, with a third column, eight thousand strong, made his appearance at the pas-

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

8.
Operations
by Ney in
Galicia after
Soult's depar-
ture.

March 17.

April 20.

May 13.

¹ Belm. i. 77,
78. Tor. ii.
327, 328.
Jones, i. 209.9.
And of Kel-
lerman in
Asturias.
May 19.

May 22.

CHAP.

LXII.

1809

May 18.

May 29.

1 Belm. i. 77,

79. Tor. ii.

327, 331.

Jones, i. 209,

210.

10.

Total defeat
of the Spanish
army of the
centre at
Ucles.

sage of the Deba, on the coast road, and threatened the Asturian capital, by the highway from France. Balasteros, who, with ten thousand of Romana's troops, endeavoured to defend the passage of that river, was defeated with the loss of two thousand men. These strong divisions had been largely reinforced by the troops of Mortier's corps, which had been transferred to Old Castile after the fall of Saragossa, and had its headquarters at Valladolid. The concentration of such formidable forces rendered it impossible for the Spaniards to defend Oviedo. Ney arrived on the 18th of May on the Nora, and forced the bridges of Pennafior and Galivos, and on the day following entered Oviedo. Meanwhile Romana, having left General Ballasteros in command of his troops, who retired from the valleys into the higher and inaccessible parts of the mountains, embarked at Gijon on the day following, and made sail for Ribadio, on the northern coast of Galicia, from whence he made his way across the hills to his brave followers, who still maintained themselves on the mountains in the interior of that province; and, joining his old soldiers near Mondoñedo, reappeared in undiminished strength in the valley of the Sil. Astonished at his active adversary having thus escaped him, Ney lost no time in retracing his footsteps, and marched direct for Lugo; and on the 29th met Marshal Soult at that place, whither he had arrived on his retreat from Portugal, after his defeat by Sir Arthur Wellesley, in the manner to be immediately noticed.¹

To complete the picture of the state of affairs in the adjoining provinces of Spain, when Sir Arthur's memorable career began, it remains to notice the situation of Estremadura and New Castile after the departure of Napoleon from the Peninsula. After the fall of Madrid, the Duke del Infantado, who commanded the army of the centre, which had fallen back towards La Mancha, with great difficulty collected twenty thousand men at Cuença in New Castile. So little, however, were the Spanish generals at this period aware of the inferiority of their troops to the French, notwithstanding all the disasters which they had undergone, that no sooner had he received accounts of the march of Napoleon with his Guards

and Ney's corps to attack Sir John Moore on the Carrion, in the end of December, than, deeming the capital now denuded of its principal defenders, he advanced to co-operate in the movement upon it. Victor, having received early intelligence of his approach, set out to meet him with fourteen thousand foot and three thousand horse; and having defeated the advanced guard under Venegas, at Tarancon, the whole fell back to a strong position in front of Ucles, where they awaited the attack of the enemy. The battle took place on the 13th January, and proved to the Spanish troops one of the most disastrous of the whole war. Victor, perceiving that the left of the enemy was the weakest part of their line, threw the bulk of his forces against that wing; it was speedily routed, and the reinforcements which Venegas sent up to its support were successively driven back. The whole army now retreated; but this retrograde movement was speedily converted into a disorderly flight by the impetuous charges of the terrible French dragoons. Fifteen hundred men were slain on the spot; nine thousand prisoners were taken, with the whole artillery, standards, and baggage of the army. This battle destroyed almost all the remains of the Spanish regular army; and the host which was thereafter collected by Cartaojal, who was appointed to succeed the Duke del Infantado in the command in the defiles of the Sierra Morena, consisted almost entirely of raw and inexperienced levies, upon whom no reliance whatever could be placed. The French disgraced their victory by the most inhuman cruelties; and, after subjecting the clergy and principal inhabitants of Ucles to every indignity, bound sixty-nine, two and two together, and massacred them, as in the Reign of Terror, some even in the public slaughter-houses. At the same time, three hundred women, the wives or daughters of the victims, who made the air resound with their shrieks at this atrocious iniquity, were delivered over, immediately after, to the passions and brutality of the soldiers; and great numbers of the prisoners taken in battle were murdered in cold blood, on the plea of reprisals.¹

After this disaster, the Spanish armies who had escaped from the rout of Ucles, and fled from the Somo-Sierra

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

Jan. 4.

Jan. 10.

Jan. 13.

¹ Belm. i. 56.
Tor. ii. 211,
219. Rocca,
Guerre
d'Espagne,
110, 113.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

11.
Rout of the
Spaniards at
Ciudad Real.

pass, fell back in two divisions: one towards the Sierra Morena, on the road to Seville; the other, in the direction of Merida and Almaraz, with a view to the support of Badajoz. The first was under the command of Cartaojal; the latter of Cuesta. Cartaojal, when his whole detachments were called in, had still, in the end of February, sixteen thousand infantry and three thousand horse, with which he watched the French under Sebastiani, who lay with fifteen thousand men at Toledo; while Cuesta, with fourteen thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry, was opposed to Victor on the Tagus, in Estremadura. The Duke d'Albuquerque commanded the advanced division of Cartaojal's army, consisting of nine thousand foot-soldiers and two thousand horse, with which he advanced in the middle of February towards Toledo, from Carolina in the Sierra Morena, where the remainder of the corps lay. This ill-concerted attack, with part only of the Spanish force, depressed by defeat, on a superior body of the enemy, flushed with victory, led to the result which might easily have been anticipated. Sebastiani hastily assembled twelve thousand men, with whom, as the enemy approached Toledo, he gave battle at Ciudad Real, and routed them in half an hour, with the loss of a thousand slain, all their guns, and three thousand prisoners. The remainder fled into the Sierra Morena, where they were quickly reinforced by new levies from Andalusia and Grenada; and Sebastiani, satisfied with his success, quickly resumed his position in the capital of La Mancha.¹

¹ Nap. i. 208,
213. Tor. ii.
279, 289.
Belm. i. 68,
69.

12.
March of the
army of
Cuesta to
Medellin.

A still greater disaster awaited the army collected in Estremadura, under the orders of Cuesta. This general, though a brave old veteran, was unhappily of a headstrong and obstinate disposition, and, being imbued with his full share of Castilian pride and ignorance, was equally incapable of taking counsel from the lessons of experience, or yielding to the advice of abler persons than himself. These peculiarities, which appeared painfully conspicuous in the course of the campaign, on the first occasion when he acted in concert with Sir Arthur Wellesley, soon brought about a very serious disaster on the plains of Estremadura. Early in March, Victor received orders from Joseph at Madrid forthwith to pass

the Tagus, in order to co-operate in Napoleon's design of the general attack upon Portugal; while at the same time Lapisse, who, with a division of eight thousand men, was stationed near Salamanca, was ordered to move and advance to Abrantes. Cuesta at this time lay on the banks of the Tagus, and occupied the famous bridge of Almaraz—a noble structure, five hundred and eighty feet long, and one hundred and thirty-four feet high, built by the town of Placencia during the reign of Charles V., and rivalling the greatest works of the Romans in solidity and grandeur. But, as the enemy had possession of the bridges of Talavera and Arsobizbo, farther up the river, it was impossible to prevent them from crossing; and the destruction of one of the arches by Cuesta's order was to be lamented, as it destroyed a precious monument of former greatness, without contributing in any material degree to present security. Cuesta, finding himself assailed along the line of the Tagus by twenty thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry, with forty-two guns, fell back at all points, and, crossing the ridge of mountains which separates the valley of the Tagus from that of the Guadiana, took post at Medellin, on the latter river, where he contrived, by rallying all his detachments, to collect twenty thousand infantry, four thousand horse, and twenty pieces of cannon. The bridge of Medellin was not seriously contested by the Spaniards, who were drawn up in the form of a half-moon, in a line about a league in breadth, a little to the south of the river. Notwithstanding his inferiority in numbers, having only fifteen thousand foot and three thousand horse on the spot, Victor immediately advanced to the attack.¹

The right wing of the Spaniards, where their best troops were placed, made a brave resistance, and for two hours not only held the enemy in check, but sensibly gained ground, and already the shouts of victory were heard in that quarter. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, Cuesta moved forward his centre, which also drove back the enemy; and deeming the victory now secure, the Spanish general sent forward his cavalry to charge. No sooner had they come into fire, however, than the whole horse, instead of charging the enemy, turned about and fled, trampling their own victorious

¹ Tor. ii. 284,
286. Nap. ii.
213, 218.
Belm. 67.

13.
Their total
rout there.

CHAP.
LXII.

1808.

infantry under foot, and spreading disorder and alarm through the whole rear. The consequences of such pusillanimous conduct, in an army composed in great part of new levies, were immediately fatal. Great part of the Spanish troops took to flight. Still, however, the victorious centre stood firm, and gallantly, by a point-blank discharge, repelled the first efforts of the victorious French dragoons ; but Victor, upon this, instantly brought up cannon, and made such gaps in their ranks by his volleys of grape, that the French dragoons succeeded in breaking through, and then the whole army took to flight. The French horse pursued the fugitives for several miles with great slaughter. The whole Spanish artillery fell into the hands of the victors ; and their total loss, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, did not fall short of ten thousand men, while that of the French did not exceed a tenth part of the number. So complete was their rout, that Cuesta, who fled with a few horsemen into the recesses of the Sierra Morena, could not, for some days after the battle, rally a single battalion of infantry ; and nothing but the strength and intricacy of those mountains, and the vague apprehension excited by the disaster experienced in the last campaign by Dupont, beyond them, prevented Victor in the first moments of dismay occasioned by this victory and that of Ciudad Real, from penetrating into Andalusia, and planting the French eagles in triumph on the minarets of Seville.¹

¹ Nap. ii.
213, 226.
Tor. ii. 284,
289. Belm.
67, 68.

14.
Situation and
views of Soult
at Oporto, at
this period.

While these disastrous events were prostrating the Spanish strength on the plains of La Mancha, and on the banks of the Guadiana, Marshal Soult lay inactive at Oporto, and was far from making that use of his important conquest which might have been expected from his vigour and ability. He had made himself master, indeed, of an opulent commercial city, abounding in resources of all kinds, and containing one hundred and ninety pieces of heavy cannon, besides immense warlike stores and magazines ; and his advanced posts, pushing forward to the south of the Douro, subdued the whole country as far as the Vanga. But not only had the obstinate hostility of the population considerably weakened his army during its march from Galicia, but it had strongly impressed him with the risk of advancing farther into a country animated by

such feelings, until he received more accurate accounts of the force and intentions of the English army, and advices of the co-operation of Lapisse and Victor on the eastern frontier of the kingdom. Nor was this all. While he himself overcame all hostility in front, the elements of a most serious resistance had again sprung up in the country he had passed, and blows of no inconsiderable magnitude had been struck, both by the Spaniards and Portuguese, on the fortified posts and detachments left in his rear.¹

The Galician insurgents, taking advantage of the absence of Soult in Portugal, and Ney with the greater part of his corps in Asturias, had collected in great strength round the depots and armed stations in the southern parts of their province. Tuy, containing the principal reserve of Soult's corps, and Vigo, garrisoned by thirteen hundred men, left in guard of the military chest, were soon surrounded each by several thousand armed peasants; and although the former, after a blockade of several weeks, was relieved by succours despatched from Oporto, the latter, with its whole garrison and treasure, fell into the hands of the Spaniards. A still more serious blow was struck by Silveira with his Portuguese levies, who had taken refuge, on the French invasion, in the wildest recesses of Tras-os-Montes. That enterprising officer, issuing from his retreat as soon as the French had passed on, suddenly appeared before Chaves, now filled with the sick and magazines of their army, entered the town without opposition, and in four days afterwards made himself master of the castle, with thirteen hundred prisoners. Encouraged by this success, he advanced on the traces of the French army; reached Braga, which he evacuated upon hearing of the fall of Oporto, and crossed over to the valley of the Tamega, where he made himself master of the important town and bridge of Amarante—a pass of great strength, the possession of which barred the principal line of communication from the Douro to Tras-os-Montes and the northern provinces of the Peninsula.²

But, in addition to these untoward circumstances, the situation of Soult, both from the intrigues with which he was surrounded, and those in which he himself was engaged, was one of a very peculiar and almost unprece-

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

¹ Tor. ii. 332, 334. Belm. i. 64, 65. Vict. et Conq. xix. 19, 20.

15.
Progress of the insurrection in Galicia and the north of Portugal.

April 6.

March 27.

March 20.

March 30.
² Belm. i. 64, 65. Tor. ii. 332, 334, 336. Lond. i. 317, 318. Vict. et Conq. xix. 19, 20.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

16.

Extraordi-
nary intrigues
in Soult's
army at this
period.

3 Thib. vii.
 546. Sav. iv.
 128. Wel.
 Desp. May 7,
 1809. Gurw.
 iv. 288.

2 Tor. ii. 344,
 345. Wel-
 lington to
 Lord Castle-
 reagh, May 7,
 1809. Gurw.
 iv. 288. Sav.
 iv. 128.

dented kind. While the example of thrones having been won by soldiers' hands in the case of Napoleon, Murat, and more recently Jerome and Joseph, had inspired the marshal with extravagant ideas of the destiny which might await him in the Lusitanian provinces, the dreadful privations which they had recently undergone, and the apparently interminable extent of the wars in which the Emperor was engaged, had laid the foundations of wide-spread disaffection among his followers. Thus a double set of intrigues was simultaneously going forward in the army at Oporto. While the French party in the northern provinces of Portugal were preparing an address, which in a few days was signed by thirty thousand persons, to Soult, praying him to assume the sovereignty of their country, and that officer, yielding to the flattering illusion, was preparing proclamations in the name of Nicholas I., King of Portugal,^{1*} and endeavouring, though without success, to gain the consent of his generals of division to the usurpation, a numerous body of superior officers in his army were organising the ramifications of a vast conspiracy among the troops, the object of which was to revolt against the authority of Napoleon, restore a republican government in France, seize Soult and such officers as should adhere to his fortunes, and put a stop to the devastating wars which he was waging to the detriment alike of his whole country and the world. Secret advances, in relation to both these projects, were made to Sir Arthur Wellesley soon after he landed; but that cautious general, without implicating himself or his government in such dark designs, continued steadfast in his plan of terminating all these chimerical projects by expelling Soult from Portugal by force of arms; while Napoleon wisely and magnanimously overlooked the whole affair, and wrote to Soult that "he recollected nothing but Austerlitz."^{2†}

It was in this situation of affairs in Spain and Portugal

* "It is certain that a proclamation was printed at Soult's headquarters, addressed to the generals of division, to be published as an order of the day; in which he announced himself King of Portugal and Algarves, subject only to the approval of the Emperor, of which he entertained no doubts. Delaborde, one of his generals, who positively refused, as well as Loison, to go into the project, long after showed a copy of this proclamation at Paris."—THIBAUDAU, vii. 546, 547.

† Soult had particularly distinguished himself in that battle. See *Ann.*, Chap. xl. § 129.

that Sir Arthur Wellesley—who shall hereafter be called WELLINGTON—LANDED AT LISBON ; and from this time forward, the historian, in narrating the annals of the Peninsular campaigns, instead of a confused and involved narrative of separate actions and operations, which no art can render interesting to the reader, and which it requires no small effort in the writer himself to apprehend, finds himself embarked on a connected and consecutive stream of events, at first inconsiderable, and scarcely attended to in the shock of vast armies on the Danube, but which steadily increased in depth and magnitude, until it attracted the attention of all Europe, and finally overwhelmed the empire of Napoleon in its waves.

Nothing could be more deplorable than the situation of Portugal when Wellington landed at Lisbon. Cradock's preparations to evacuate that capital, unavoidable and prudent at the time of the Corunna retreat, had not only depressed to the highest degree the spirit of the people, but aroused, to an extent which had become truly alarming, the general suspicion of treachery in all classes. Lisbon was in the most violent state of agitation ; the cry of treason had been raised ; a British uniform no longer secured the wearer from insult, and on the contrary often exposed him to assault. Couriers were robbed of their despatches ; guards insulted on their posts ; and to such a pitch had the public audacity risen, that the same precautions against mob-violence which had been taken by Junot for his security after the defeat of Vimiera, were now resorted to by Cradock from the pressure of the same necessity. Nor was this spirit confined to Lisbon. In Oporto, the disposition to insult the British was still more decided than in the capital, and the government of the multitude yet more decidedly pronounced. From the Minho to the Tagus, the country was in a state of tumult and insubordination : the soldiers, scattered without regard to military system, and unpaid, lived at free-quarters on the inhabitants ; while, all government and law being in abeyance, the peasantry of the country in bands, and the populace of the towns in mobs, intercepted the communications, appointed or displaced the generals at pleasure, and massacred without mercy all persons of whom they were suspicious.¹

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

17.

First measures of Wellington in Portugal.
April 22.

18.

Deplorable state of Portugal when Wellington landed.

¹ Maxwell's Life of Wellington, i. 505. Napier, ii. 380, 381.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

19.
Wellington's
plan for the
defence of
Portugal.

Nothing daunted by this inauspicious and apparently desperate state of things, Wellington, with that far-seeing wisdom and unconquerable firmness which is the foundation of every thing great in this world, was calmly preparing the means of an efficient and permanent defence of the country. Before leaving London, he had submitted to government a memorandum, which became the foundation of the whole defensive system afterwards pursued in that country; and to the steady prosecution of which, through all the vicissitudes of fortune, the ultimate deliverance of the Peninsula and Europe is, beyond all question, to be ascribed.* Appreciating with perfect accuracy, as the event subsequently proved, the military advantages of Portugal, intersected by mountains, inhabited by a brave and hardy peasantry, lying on the flank of Spain, and backed by the ocean, that true base of British military operations, he gave it as his decided opinion, that, even if Spain were conquered, thirty thousand Portuguese regular

* "I have always been of opinion that Portugal might be defended whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain; and that, in the mean time, the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal would be highly useful to the Spaniards in their contest with the French. My opinion was, that the Portuguese military establishments, upon the footing of 40,000 militia and 30,000 regular troops, ought to be revived; and that, in addition to these troops, his Majesty ought to employ an army in Portugal, amounting to about 20,000 British troops, including about 4000 cavalry. My opinion was, that even if Spain should have been conquered, the French would not have been able to overrun Portugal with a smaller force than 100,000 men; and that, as long as the contest should continue in Spain, this force, if it could be put in a state of activity, would be highly useful to the Spaniards, and might eventually have decided the contest.

"The British force employed in Portugal should, in this view of the question, not be less than 30,000 men, of which number four or five thousand should be cavalry, and there should be a large body of artillery.

"The whole of the army in Portugal, Portuguese as well as British, should be placed under the command of British officers. The staff of the army, the commissariat in particular, must be British; and these departments must be extensive in proportion to the strength of the whole army which will act in Portugal, to the number of detached posts which it will be necessary to occupy, and with a view to the difficulties of providing and distributing supplies in that country. In regard to the details of these measures, I recommend that the British army in Portugal should be reinforced, as soon as possible, with some companies of British riflemen, and with 3000 British or German cavalry; that the complement of ordnance with that army should be made thirty pieces of cannon, of which two brigades should be nine-pounders; that these pieces of ordnance should be completely horsed; that twenty pieces of brass (twelve-pounders) ordnance, upon travelling carriages, should be sent to Portugal, with a view to the occupation of certain positions in the country; that a corps of engineers for an army of 60,000 men should be sent there, and a corps of artillery for sixty pieces of cannon.

"I understand that the British army now in Portugal consists of 20,000 men, including cavalry. It should be made up to 20,000 infantry at least, as soon as possible, by additions of riflemen and other good infantry, which by this time may have been refitted after the campaign in Spain."—WELLINGTON'S *Minute*, London, 9th March 1809; GURWOOD.

CHAP. I.
LXII.
1809.

troops, supported by forty thousand militia, and thirty thousand English foot-soldiers, including four thousand cavalry, could defend the country, and render it impregnable to a less force than a hundred thousand French. These judicious suggestions were acted upon without reserve by the government: the old military institutions of the monarchy were revived; thirty thousand men were ordered to be raised by conscription, and taken into British pay; the militia and ordenanzas were called out; British officers were sent over in great numbers for the troops of the line; and General Beresford was appointed commander-in-chief of the Portuguese forces, and soon communicated to the whole the inestimable advantages of regular organisation, vigorous energy, and strict discipline.¹

¹ Maxwell, i. 504, 510.
Lond i. 212, 215. Nap. ii. 426, 434.

Immense was the effect produced by these energetic and well-timed measures. The very suspending the preparations for embarkation, and the forward movement of the troops, operated like a charm in stilling the public discontent. Confidence generally revived when these measures were followed by the taking so large a body of Portuguese troops into British pay, the calling out of the militia, landing of stores, artillery, and reinforcements from England, and other measures, which indicated a serious resolution to defend the country. The bands of robbers and desperadoes who infested the roads, speedily found employment, regular pay, and good rations in the army; and these advantages, to which the soldiers had been entire strangers under the corrupt administration of their old government, ere long attracted the daring and energetic from every part of the country to the patriotic standards. These feelings of reviving hope and increased confidence were worked up to the highest pitch by the landing of Sir Arthur Wellesley, with a brilliant staff, at Lisbon on the 22d April. Into every department his presence seemed to infuse new life and confidence. Men spoke no longer of defensive measures; the occupation of Oporto by Soult was forgotten: the question in every one's mouth was, "When shall we move forward?" The delight of the Portuguese was unbounded: they hailed the British hero as if conquest and his name were one. A British uniform no longer attracted obloquy: it universally awakened respect. All day long the streets were

20.
Great effect of these measures in Portugal.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Lond. l.
104, 110.
Maxwell, i.
507, 510.

21.
Reasons for
operating
first against
Soult at
Oporto.

crowded with joyous assemblages, congratulating each other on the happy event ; and at night the city was illuminated, even in its obscurest streets and alleys. In the theatres pieces were hastily got up, in which Victory was made to crown the hero with laurels, and address him in strains which, though then savouring of the language of panegyric, were afterwards found to be but anticipations of the truth.¹

Two different systems of operation presented themselves to the choice of the English general, when he took the command in Portugal. The first was to move to the eastward, and combine an attack with Cuesta on Victor, in the valley of the Tagus. This plan, which was strongly recommended by the Spanish general, had the advantage of striking at once at the heart of the enemy's power, and, by compelling the concentration of his principal forces to cover Madrid, would prove a seasonable relief to the patriot bands in all quarters, and prepare the means of renewed resistance in the remote provinces, especially that of Andalusia. Wellington was not insensible to the importance of these considerations ; and he declared, two days after his arrival in Portugal, that he was convinced, "the French would be in serious danger in Spain, only when a great force shall be collected which shall oblige them to concentrate their troops ; and a combined operation of the force in this country, with that under Cuesta, may be the groundwork of such extended operations." But, on more mature consideration, it was justly deemed more expedient to commence operations by clearing the northern provinces of Portugal of the enemy. Much dissatisfaction would with reason be excited in that country, if, while one-third of its territory was still in the hands of the enemy, a portion of the native and all the allied forces should be employed in a foreign operation ; the English army might be exposed to considerable hazard, if, while far advanced into the interior of Spain, its line of communication were to be menaced by the advance of Soult from Oporto. And it was of no small consequence, in a war in which so much depended on opinion and early success, to engage at first in an operation within the compass of the British army alone,² rather than in one in which much would depend on the co-operation of the Spanish

² Well. to
Frere, 24th
Apr. 1809.
Gurw. iv.
247 and 249,
to Lord
Castlereagh.

forces, too clearly proved, by woful experience, to be incapable of standing in the field the shock of the imperial legions.

CHAP.

LXII.

1809.

Operations against Soult being resolved on in the first instance, Wellington moved his force in two columns towards the north of Portugal. The right, consisting of six thousand foot and one thousand horse, under Beresford, was to advance by Viseu and Lamego, towards the upper Douro, in order to co-operate with Silviera, who, it was hoped, still held the line of the Tamega, and the important bridge of Amarante; and thus turn Soult's left flank, and cut him off from any retreat by Braga or across the Trassos-Montes to Astorga and Leon: the left, under Wellington in person, after assembling at Coimbra, consisting of fifteen thousand infantry and sixteen hundred cavalry, was to move directly by the Vauga upon Oporto. Hopes were entertained that a considerable part of Soult's army might be cut off in its retreat from the Vauga to the Douro; and measures had been very skilfully taken to surprise the enemy and secure that object. But the French general got information of the approach of the English, and the conspiracy in his own army, just in time to prevent the catastrophe: the principal leaders were suddenly arrested, and the troops rapidly withdrawn behind the Douro; the bridge over which, at Oporto, was prepared for firing, and all the boats that could be discovered were brought over to the northern bank of the river. At the same time, Loison was despatched to the rear, with a strong division, to clear the banks of the Tamega, and secure the bridge of Amarante; and, after some days' sharp fighting, he succeeded in that object, and dislodged Silviera from that important post. Mackenzie, meanwhile, with three thousand British and four thousand Portuguese troops, was moved forward to Alcantara and the eastern frontier of the kingdom, to observe Lapisse and Victor, and afford some protection to that exposed part of the Portuguese dominions.¹

22.
Marches
against Soult

May 2.

¹ Well. to
Mackenzie,
1st May 1809.
Gur. iv. 265
and 273.
Nap. ii.
283-5. Tor.
ii. 345, 346.

The British advanced posts fell in with the enemy on the 11th May; but, by a rapid retreat, they succeeded in extricating themselves from a situation of some peril, crossed the Douro, and burned the bridge of boats at Oporto. The English standards soon appeared in great

23.
Commence-
ment of the
passage of
the Douro.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

May 12.

strength on the southern bank, and the French battalions lined the northern shore; but the broad Douro rolled between the hostile forces, and it appeared next to impossible, without either bridge or boats, to cross the river in face of a nearly equal force. Early on the morning of the 12th, however, General Murray succeeded in collecting some boats four miles up at Avintas; and three having, by great daring, been obtained by Colonel Waters, by crossing in a small skiff opposite the Seminary at Oporto, twenty-five of the Buffs were quickly ferried over in the first boat, and the two others rapidly following, about a hundred men got a footing under cover of that building, unperceived by the enemy. The anxiety of the people, however, soon drew the enemy's attention to the spot; and no sooner were the red coats perceived, than a tumultuous noise of drums and shouts was heard in the city, and confused masses of the enemy were seen hurrying forth in all directions, and throwing out clouds of sharpshooters, who came furiously down upon the Seminary. The building was soon surrounded; the fire of the enemy visibly augmented faster than that of the British: General Paget, who commanded, was struck down severely wounded; the eager gesticulations of the citizens from the houses on the opposite bank, implored relief for their heroic allies, now apparently doomed to destruction.¹

¹ Well. Desp.
12th May
1809. Gurw.
iv. 297.
Behn. i. 72.
Tor. ii. 345,
347.

24.
Which is at
length suc-
cessfully
effected.

So violent was the struggle, so critical the moment, that Wellington himself was on the point of crossing to share the dangers of his advanced guard; and it was only the entreaties of his friends, and his own just confidence in GENERAL HILL, who now commanded, which prevented him from doing so. By degrees, however, the fire of the British artillery, consisting of twenty guns, placed on the heights of Villa Nova, on a projecting promontory of the southern bank, opposite the Seminary, became so powerful, that it drove the enemy from all sides of the building, excepting the iron gate on the north, where the Buffs were a match for them: some daring citizens crossed over with large boats to Sherbrooke's division, farther down the river, which was soon ferried over in considerable bodies; and hesitation became visible in the French ranks, which was increased to confusion, when Murray's columns, on the extreme

right of the British, began to appear and threaten their communication with Amarante and the great line of retreat. Horse, foot, and cannon, now rushed tumultuously towards the rear; the city was hastily evacuated, amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the people. Hill's central column, strongly reinforced by the 48th and 66th regiments which had crossed, debouched fiercely from the Seminary, and by repeated volleys on the flank of the flying troops, threw them into utter confusion; and nothing but the inactivity of Murray on the right, who did not make the use he might have done of his advantageous position on the flank of the retreating host, preserved them from total ruin. As it was, they lost five hundred killed and wounded, five guns, and a large quantity of ammunition, in the action: seven hundred sick were taken in the hospital, and fifty French guns in the arsenal; and so complete and unexpected was the surprise, that Wellington, at four o'clock, quietly sat down to the dinner and table-service which had been prepared for Marshal Soult.¹

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

¹ Wel. Desp.
12th May
1809. Gur.
iv. 297, 301.
Nap. ii. 287,
291. Belm.
i. 72, 73.
Tor. ii. 345,
347.

Rowland Hill, afterwards Lord Hill, one of the most distinguished officers of the British army, who first rose to eminence in this combat, was second son of Sir John Hill of Hawkstone, in Shropshire, and was born there on August 11, 1772. He was educated, in the first instance, at Rugby; but completed his instruction for the army at the military academy at Strasburg. At the age of sixteen, he obtained a commission in the 38th regiment, from which he was afterwards transferred to the 27th; and he made his first essay in arms, like Napoleon, at the siege of Toulon, as he closed his career in combating the same commander at Waterloo. At Toulon he was slightly wounded; and having been intrusted by Sir David Dundas with bringing home the despatches, he was offered by Colonel Graham, (afterwards Lord Lynedoch,) who had served as a volunteer in the same fortress, a majority in the 90th regiment, which Graham had just raised. He was soon made lieutenant-colonel in the same regiment, at the head of which he gallantly combated in the battle of Alexandria, on the 21st March 1801.* His

25.
Early history
of General
Hill.

* *Ante*, Chap. xxiv. § 30.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

conduct on that occasion was so conspicuous that he was presented by the Pasha of Egypt with a superb sword as a mark of gratitude. In 1803 he was made major-general; and he commanded a brigade under Wellesley at the battles of Roliça and Vimiera. He was afterwards engaged in Sir John Moore's retreat; did good service in the battle of Corunna, and directed the rear-guard which covered the embarkation of the troops on the following day. In 1809, he was again sent out to the Peninsula, at the head of a brigade: and on Sir Edward Paget being wounded, succeeded to the command in the Seminary, which he held with heroic courage, till assistance was ferried over from the opposite side. Thenceforward his career needs no biography: his deeds are emblazoned on the brightest page of England's glory: he will be found by Wellington's side on every field of fame, from the Douro to Waterloo.

26.
His character.

Like Suwarroff, Hill had the rare felicity of never having been beaten in the field, but, unlike him, he enjoyed his sovereign's honours and country's gratitude to an advanced old age. Without the great and overruling talents requisite in a general-in-chief, no officer ever possessed a rarer assemblage of qualities fitted to render him an incomparable second in command. Brave in action, sagacious in design, secret in counsel, cool in danger, prompt in execution, he conducted with admirable skill the enterprises intrusted to his direction; and by the suddenness and rapidity of his strokes against detached columns, as well as the firmness and intrepidity of his conduct in general actions, contributed essentially to the general success of the war. No British general inspired such dread to the French officers, and none so frequently caught them at a disadvantage, and struck such sudden and weighty blows against them. When it was known in subsequent times, that Hill had set off from the British position at the head of a body of light troops, the French generals stood to their arms from the Douro to the Sierra Morena. Simple and affable in his manners, humane and benevolent, he united the virtues of a citizen to the qualities of a hero, and was beloved by all classes. With the unanimous concurrence of the army, he was afterwards made commander-in-chief, which

exalted situation he held, till, full of years and honour, he retired in 1842, a few months before his death.

To have crossed such a river as the Douro, in presence of such a general as Soult, with a force little, if at all, superior to his own, was a most brilliant opening of the campaign, and was justly regarded as reflecting as much credit on the daring and skill of the young English general, as it cast a shade on the vigilance and circumspection of the veteran French marshal. But Napoleon's troops were, beyond all others, capable of remedying such a disaster; and, notwithstanding the confusion into which they had been thrown by their precipitate retreat, before nightfall order was restored, and the army securely rested under the protection of a vigilant and powerful rearguard. Next morning Soult was quietly resuming his march for Guimaraens, in the direction of Amarante, when he received the stunning intelligence that that important post, commanding the only bridge and defile over the Tamega, and the only line of retreat practicable for artillery, was already in the hands of the enemy. In effect, Beresford, having crossed the Douro farther up, had attacked Loison's outposts at Amarante on the morning of the 12th, with such vigour that he fell back from that post in the direction of Oporto, and met the retreating columns evacuating that city late at night.¹

Soult's situation now seemed all but desperate: the well-known strength of the bridge of Amarante precluded the hope that it could be forced by discouraged and retreating troops, now that it was held by regular British and Portuguese soldiers; the great road to Braga was already in the possession of the enemy, as they held Oporto, from which it issued: and it could be regained only by cross hill-roads, totally impracticable for artillery, and almost impassable for mules or horses. Yet not a moment was to be lost: already the British outposts began to appear, and the thunder of their horse-artillery was heard at no great distance. The energy of the French general, however, now fully aroused, was equal to the crisis. He resolved to abandon his artillery, ammunition, and baggage, and make his way, with all imaginable expedition, across the mountains to the Braga road. This resolution was immediately carried into execution.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

27.

Soult's
hazardous
situation.

¹ Well. Desp.
18th May
1809. Gurw.
iv. 315. Tor.
ii. 346.
Belm. i. 72.

28.

His vigorous
and able
measures to
extricate
himself.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Belm. i. 72,
74. Well.
Desp. 18th
May 1809.
Gur. iv. 315.
Tor. ii. 346,
347.

All the powder which the men could no carry was blown up near Penafiel on the morning of the 13th ; and the French army, abandoning its whole carriages, rapidly ascended the valley of the Sousa by roads almost impracticable, even for the cavalry ; rejoined Loison at Guimaraens ; and continuing its passage over the mountains, and leaving Braga on its left, at length regained the great road at San-Joad del Rey, a short way beyond that town.¹

29.
His disastrous
retreat and
extreme
danger.

Notwithstanding the sacrifice of his whole *matériel*, however, Soult's retreat was extremely disastrous, even to the soldiers of his army. When he rejoined Loison at Guimaraens, it became necessary to sacrifice all the artillery and ammunition belonging to that division ; heavy rains, ever since the 13th, impeded the progress of the troops through the mountains ; the stragglers multiplied at every step ; frightful defiles, beside raging torrents, formed their paths ; the shoes of the soldiers were worn out ; they could hardly bear their arms ; and, with the whole remaining mules and horses, all the sick and wounded fell into the hands of the British. The streams, every where swollen by the excessive floods, were impassable, except by their bridges ; and the arch of Ponte Nova, over the roaring torrent of the Cavado, was the only line of retreat which lay open, after the occupation of the road to Braga by Wellington, and Amarante by Beresford. This bridge was occupied, and had been partially destroyed by the peasants : unless it could be regained, the hour of surrender had arrived, for the army was struggling through a narrow defile between awful precipices, almost in single file. Wellington, in close pursuit, thundered in the rear, and would infallibly attack on the following morning.²

May 15.

² Gurw. iv.
315. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
39, 44. Nap.
ii. 294, 298.
Tor. ii. 347,
349.

30.
And narrow
escape into
Galicia.

In this extremity the heroic courage of Colonel Dulong, who in the dark, with twelve grenadiers, crept along a narrow ledge of masonry which was left of the arch, surprised the Portuguese guards, and made himself master of the bridge, extricated the army from this apparently hopeless situation, and opened up the road to Montalegre, where the whole arrived perfectly exhausted, and in woful plight, late on the evening of the 17th.

May 17.

Soult continued his retreat across the Galician frontier, reached Orense on the 26th, and on the day following met Ney at Lugo, who had returned from his Asturian expedition, and dislodged an irregular body of twelve thousand peasants who were blockading three French battalions in that place. "His condition," says Jomini, "was much more disastrous than that in which General Moore had traversed the same town six months before." The French disgraced this retreat by the most savage cruelty. The peasants were massacred, and their houses burned by them, along the whole line of march, without remorse: but their own losses were very severe, amounting to about a fourth part of the whole troops which were attacked on the Douro, besides all their artillery, ammunition, and baggage, and even a considerable part of their muskets.¹

After this important success, Wellington returned to Oporto, from whence he moved his troops forward as rapidly as possible to Abrantes, and engaged in active preparations for co-operating with Cuesta, and advancing through Estremadura towards Madrid. Victor had not improved his important victory at Medellin so much as might have been expected, especially considering the great amount and excellent quality of his cavalry, which were of inestimable importance in the level plains that run up to the foot of the Sierra Morena. But the operations of the English general were impeded for above a month by the want of money, of which at this period he bitterly complained, and which led him to suspect at the time that government had engaged in an enterprise beyond their strength. In truth, however, the finances of Great Britain, as the event proved, were fully equal to the strain; and the difficulty arose entirely from the extraordinary scarcity of *specie* at that crisis, in the British islands, arising in some degree, perhaps, from the profuse though unavoidable issue of paper to carry on the prodigious mercantile operations and national expenditure of the period, but much more from the vast consumption and requisitions of the French and Austrian armies during the campaign on the Danube, which caused every guinea to be bought up at an extravagant premium for the use of these continental armies. At the same time, the want of

CHAP.

LXII.

1809.

¹ Jom. iii.
335. Wel.
Desp. 18th
and 22d May
1809. Gur.
iv. 315, 326.
Nap. ii. 294,
300. Tor. ii.
347, 349.
Belm. i. 74,
75. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
39, 44.

31.

Wellington's
preparations
for operations
in Estre-
madura.

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

warlike experience was severely felt in the army, both on the part of the officers and soldiers. The commissariat, in all its branches, was very defective. Released by a month's intermission from active operations, from the excitement and dangers of actual warfare, the troops gave themselves up to disorders of every kind. Plunder was universal along their line of march : the country, for miles on either side, was filled with stragglers ; and the instant the common men got out of the sight of their officers, outrages were committed without end on the defenceless inhabitants, who had hailed their arrival as deliverers. To such a height did these evils arise, that Wellington, in several regiments, directed the roll to be called every hour ; he largely augmented the powers and force at the disposal of the provost-marshal ; and in the bitterness of his heart more than once wrote to government, that the British army, "excellent on parade, excellent to fight, was worse than an enemy in a country, and liable to dissolution alike by success or defeat."¹

¹ Gurw. iv.
407. Well.
to Castle-
reagh, 17th
June 1809.

32.
Great dis-
orders of the
British
troops, and
their causes.

Doubtless the large arrears of pay due at this time to the army, amounting to £300,000, and in several regiments embracing two months' pay, contributed in a great degree to this disgraceful state of things ; and it is interesting to trace the early difficulties of that commander in training his troops to the duties of real warfare, who afterwards declared, in the just pride of experienced achievement, "that with the army he led from Spain into France, he could have gone any where and done any thing." But these facts are highly valuable, as demonstrating how essentially the military is an art dependent upon practice for success ; how little even rigid discipline, gallant officers, and admirable equipment, can compensate for the want of actual experience ; what difficulties the commander had to contend with, who was compelled thus to educate his officers and soldiers in presence of the enemy ; how much allowance must be made for the disasters of the Spanish troops, who, without any of those advantages, were at once exposed to the shock of the veteran legions of Napoleon ; and what must have been the sterling courage of those men, who, even when thus inexperienced, were never once brought in the Peninsula into fair combat with the enemy,² that they did not suc-

² Well. Desp.
to Lord
Castlereagh,
&c. 30th
May ; 7th,
16th, and
17th June
1809. Gurw.
iv. 343, 352,
307, 346, 355,
363, 400.

cessfully assert the inherent superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

33.

Plan of a
combined
movement on
Madrid.
June 27.

Remittances to an adequate amount in gold bars and specie, having, in consequence of the pressing representations of the English general, been at length obtained, on the 25th of June, for the army, and a more efficient system of control established by his unceasing vigilance among the troops, Wellington, in the end of that month, commenced his march from Abrantes, in the direction of Alcantara and the Spanish frontier. His plan at first was, that Cuesta should maintain himself in some strong position towards the foot of the Sierra Morena, and if possible amuse Victor so as to retain him in that quarter, to the south not only of the Tagus, but of the Guadiana; while he himself moved on Placencia and Talavera, so as to cut off his retreat to Madrid, and prevent his junction with the forces of Sebastiani in La Mancha, or those of Joseph in the capital. This design, however, which had every thing to recommend it, was found to be impracticable from the obstinacy of Cuesta, who refused to retire any farther back than the banks of the Guadiana, and the impossibility of finding any position there, where there was the least chance of his making a successful stand if attacked by Victor. The English general, therefore, was compelled to alter his views, and adopt the more hazardous plan of a junction and combined operation of the two armies. July 1.

With this view, the British army marched by Castellanbranco, Coria, and Placencia; while the Spanish advanced by the bridges of Almaraz and Arsobizbo. Victor fell back as Wellington advanced, and the two armies effected their junction at Oropesa, on the 20th July; July 20.

while Sir Robert Wilson, with his brave Lusitanian legion and three thousand Spaniards, advanced on their left from the Alberche to the mountains of the Escorial, and with that force approached and actually put himself in communication with Madrid. The forces which thus menaced the capital were very considerable. The English were twenty-two thousand strong, of whom three thousand were cavalry, with thirty guns; Cuesta had thirty-two thousand infantry, and six thousand horse, with forty-six cannon; and Venegas, who was to advance on Toledo, and join the other two armies in the neigh-

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Wel. Desp.
June 17,
July 1, July
24, 1809.
Gurw. iv.
403, 499.
Belm. i. 89,
90. Nap. ii.
339. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
278, 279.

bourhood of the capital, was at the head of twenty-three thousand infantry, and three thousand cavalry—in all above eighty-five thousand men, but of different nations, independent of each other, and of whom the British alone could be relied on for movements in the field in presence of the enemy. Beresford, meanwhile, with fifteen thousand Portuguese, established his headquarters at Fuente Guinaldo, near Ciudad Rodrigo; but his duty was merely to protect the frontier from insult, and observe the enemy at Salamanca, not to take any active part in the important operations which were in contemplation.¹

34.
Preparations
and forces of
the French
generals.

The approach of armies so considerable, all converging towards the capital, produced an alarming excitement —the sure proof, as Jomini observes, of the judgment with which the enterprise had been conceived. Joseph no sooner received intelligence of the formidable forces with which he was menaced, than he despatched the most pressing orders to Soult and Ney, who were at Astorga on the frontiers of Leon, and Mortier, who lay at Valladolid, to unite their forces and descend as rapidly as possible through the pass of the Puerto de Banos, which forms the only line of communication through the great central chain of Spanish mountains from the valley of the Douro to that of the Tagus, to Placencia, so as to menace the communications of the English army with Lisbon. He himself, leaving only three weak battalions in the Retiro, marched with six thousand of his guards and five thousand other troops towards Toledo, which was assigned as the general rendezvous of all his forces: Sebastiani was hastily ordered to the same place, whither also Victor fell back from Talavera. Before doing so, however, Victor narrowly escaped destruction on the 23d, when the British troops were all in readiness for the attack, and Victor was exposed alone to their blows. The events which followed leave no room for doubt, that

² Wel. Desp.
July 24, 1809.
Gurw. iv. 499.
Nap. ii. 372,
373. Tor. iii.
36, 37. Belm.
i. 91, 92.
Jom. iii. 340,
344.

if Wellington had attacked, even unsupported by the Spaniards on that day, he would have gained a glorious victory; but it could have led to no beneficial result, menaced as the British army was by the descent of an overwhelming force in its rear. Cuesta refused to fight on that day, as his troops were not prepared; and next morning,² when the columns of attack were formed at

daylight, the enemy had disappeared, having retired in the night in the direction of Toledo.

Finding himself, on the 25th July, by the concentration of these forces, at the head of fifty-five thousand brave veterans, animated by repeated victories, and under the direction of experienced officers, Joseph deemed himself sufficiently strong to resume the offensive; and, contrary to the strenuous advice of Jourdan, and, indeed, the dictates of common sense on the subject, gave orders to advance, before the co-operation of Soult, Ney, and Mortier, who could not arrive on the Tagus before the 1st of August, could be relied on. He quickly repulsed the vanguard of Cuesta, which, elated by the continued retreat of the French before them, were advancing in a disorderly manner, dreaming of Madrid and the Pyrenees; and, on the 26th, the French troops, driving Cuesta's videttes before them, reappeared in great strength in front of TALAVERA. The English general had only sent two brigades in pursuit of the enemy beyond the Alberche, having already begun to experience that pressing want of provisions and means of transport, which soon had such important effects on the issue of the campaign; and, in consequence, having resolved not to advance with the main body of his force beyond that stream, till some arrangement was made for the supply of these necessary articles.¹

The whole allied army took post at Talavera, in a battlefield well calculated, by the diversity of its character, to bring into action the various qualities of the troops who were there to combat for the independence of the Peninsula. On the right, the dense but disorderly array of the Spaniards, with their flank resting on the Tagus, occupied the town and environs of Talavera, with the olive woods, intersected with enclosures, which lay along its front, filled with light troops, and their numerous artillery planted in an advantageous position along the front of the line, and commanding all the avenues by which it could be approached. Far beyond the enclosures, the British stood in the open field on the left, on the uneven ground which extended from the olive woods to the foot of the hills, forming the first range of the Sierra de Montalban. A deep ravine, in the bottom of which

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

35.
Joseph advances towards Talavera.

¹ Gurw. iv. 504. Belm. i. 91, 92. Nap. ii. 386.

36.
Description of the field of Talavera.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

flowed the Portina rivulet, lay at the foot of these hills, and formed the extreme British left; the streamlet turning sharp round, and winding its way through to the Tagus at Talavera, ran across the front of the whole allied line. On the heights on one side of it, the French were placed in a strong position, with their batteries on the right, placed on some lofty ridges commanding a great part of the field of battle. Right opposite to them stood the British line, on a similar range of eminences, and their guns also sweeping the open slope by which they were to be ascended. In the centre between the two armies, there was a commanding hillock or mount, on which the English had begun to construct a redoubt, and on which some Spanish guns were placed; it was evident, that on its possession the fate of the approaching battle would in a great degree depend.^{1*}

¹ Wel. Desp. July 29, 1809, Gurw. iv. 504. Belm. i. 91, 92. Kausler, 536. Nap. ii. 386, 387.

37. Bloody action on the 27th July.

About three o'clock on the afternoon of the 27th, Victor's advanced guards approached the British outposts, stationed beyond the Portina streamlet, and immediately commenced an attack. Some of the English regiments, which had then seen fire for the first time, were thrown into confusion by the suddenness of the onset, and Wellington, who was with the advanced posts, narrowly escaped being made prisoner; while ten thousand Spaniards on the right were so alarmed by the French light cavalry riding up to them and discharging their pistols, that they broke after a single discharge of their muskets, and, flying tumultuously several miles to the rear, gave out that all was lost. Wellington, however, brought up some veteran troops to the scene of danger, and checked

* The exact French and allied force at Talavera, as obtained by Kausler from the War-office at Paris, was as follows:—

FRENCH.			ALLIES.		
		Guns.			Guns.
Royal Guards,	-	5,000	British Infantry	}	16,663
Victor's corps.			(28½ battalions.)	}	30
Infantry and artillery,	18,890	30	Artillery, engineers, &c.,	-	1,237
Cavalry,	3,781		Cavalry,	-	3,047
Sebastiani's Corps.					
Infantry and artillery,	17,100	30			20,997
Cavalry,	3,670		Spanish infantry and		
Reserve divisions.			artillery,	-	33,000
Infantry and artillery,	7,681	20	Cavalry,	-	6,000
75 bat. 39 squad.	-	56,122			59,997
		80			100

—See KAUSLER, 535; and NAPIER, ii. 361.

With officers and non-commissioned officers, &c., the British were about 22,000: the sabres and bayonets only appearing on the rolls.

the disorder ; while at the same time the British advanced posts, covered by the brave 45th regiment, and the 5th battalion of the 60th, retired to the position of the main body on the other side of the stream. Encouraged by this success, Victor, as night approached, was induced to hazard an attack on the English left, stationed on their line of heights ; and for this purpose Ruffin was ordered to charge with his division, supported by Vilatte, while Lapisse fell on the German Legion on their right, so as to prevent assistance being rendered from the other parts of the line.¹

The forces which thus were brought into action by the French were above twenty thousand men, and the assault was so quick and vigorous, that though Colonel Donkin* gallantly repulsed the corps which attacked his front, his left flank was at the same moment turned by several French battalions, who, having advanced unperceived through the valley, suddenly appeared with loud shouts on the heights in his rear. General Hill, however, with the 29th regiment, charged them without an instant's delay, and drove them down the hill ; and immediately bringing up other battalions, formed a convex front, facing outwards, which effectually covered the British left. It was full time ; for Lapisse soon after opened a heavy fire on the German Legion on the right, and fresh battalions of Ruffin's division, emerging from the hollow, resolutely advanced to storm the heights on the left. It was now dark : the opposing lines approached to within thirty yards of each other, and the frequent flashes of the musketry enabled the dauntless antagonists to discern each others' visages through the gloom. For a few minutes the event seemed doubtful : but soon the loud cheer of the British soldiers was heard above the receding roar of the musketry, and the French fell back in disorder into the hollow, while Lapisse drew off on the right : and the soldiers on either side, worn out with fatigue, sank to sleep around the fires of their bivouacs.²

Not discouraged by this bloody repulse, which cost him above eight hundred of his best troops, Victor, contrary to the advice of Jourdan, who contended strenuously that all offensive operations should be suspended till Soult was

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

¹ Gurw. iv. 504, 505. Nap. ii. 392. Jom. iii. 344. Vict. et Conq. xix. 282, 283.

38.
Repulse of the attack on the British left.

² Nap. ii. 392, 295. Wel. Desp. iv. 505, 506. Jom. iii. 344, 345. Kausler, 537. Vict. et Conq. xix. 282, 284.

39.
Desperate battle on the 28th.

* Afterwards General Sir Rufane Donkin.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

sufficiently near to threaten the enemy's communications, prevailed on Joseph to permit him to renew the battle on the following morning. The centre of the British being deemed too strong, by reason of the ravine which covered their front, it was determined to make the attack on the heights on the left. At eight o'clock, Ruffin's division again advanced to the attack, supported by Villatte's, and the French troops with an intrepid step ascended to the summit of the hill; while the artillery on both sides kept up a vehement fire, and soon made frightful chasms in the opposing ranks. Having gallantly made their way to the summit, the French instantly closed with Hill's division, and for half an hour a desperate struggle took place, in the course of which Hill himself was wounded, and his men were falling fast. But the French loss was still greater; insensibly their line gave ground, and at length, being forced back to the edge of the slope, the whole broke, and were hurled in wild disorder to the foot of the hill. Fearful, from these repeated attacks, that the enemy would at length succeed in turning his left, Wellington placed his cavalry at the entrance of the valley, obtained from Cuesta the succour of Bassecourt's division, which he stationed on the hills beyond its outer side, and two guns to reinforce Hill's batteries, which were bravely served by the Spanish gunners, and rendered good service during the remainder of the day.¹

¹ Wel. Desp.
July 29.
Gurw. iv. 506.
Vict. et Cong.
xix. 285, 286.
Jom. iii. 345.
346. Nap. ii.
396, 400.

40.
Temporary
suspension of
the battle
during the
heat of the
day.

The extreme heat of the day now for a few hours suspended the combat, during which the lines were re-formed on both sides, the ammunition-waggon's replenished, and the wounded withdrawn to the rear. In this interval Joseph held a council of war, in which Jourdan again renewed his counsel that they should retire to the Alberche, and Victor urged that they should recommence the attack. The latter advice prevailed, chiefly in consequence of the arrival of a courier from Soult, announcing that he could not arrive at Placencia till the 4th August, and of the threatening advance of Venegas, who was already near Aranjuez. Meanwhile, the troops on either part, overcome by thirst, straggled down in great numbers to the streamlet which ran in the bottom of the ravine which separated the two armies. Not a shot was fired,

not a drum was beat ; peaceably the foemen drank from the opposite banks of the same rill ; and not unfrequently the hands which had so recently before been dyed in mutual slaughter, were extended and shaken across the water in token of their mutual admiration of the valour and constancy displayed on both sides. Wellington, meanwhile, was seated on the grass on the top of the hill which had been so obstinately contested, eagerly surveying the enemy's movements, which indicated a renewal of the conflict with redoubled forces along the whole line. At this moment Colonel Donkin rode up to him, charged with a message from the Duke D'Albuquerque, that Cuesta was betraying him. Calmly continuing his survey, Wellington desired Donkin to return to his brigade ! In a few minutes a rolling of drums was heard along the whole French line ; the broad dark masses of the enemy appeared full in view ; and, preceded by the fire of eighty pieces of artillery, forty thousand men advanced to the attack.¹

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

¹ Lord Castlereagh's Speech, Feb. 1, 1809, *Parl. Deb.* xv. 293. *Vict. et Conq.* xix. 285, 286. *Nap.* 398, 401. *Well. Desp.* *Gurw.* iv. 506, 507.

The French columns came down their side of the ravine at a rapid pace, and though a little disordered by crossing the stream, mounted the opposite hill with the utmost intrepidity. On the extreme British right, Sebastiani's corps fell with the utmost fury on General Campbell's division, and by their loud cries indicated the confidence of immediate victory ; but their attack was in column and the English were in line ; and the inherent vice of that arrangement became at once apparent. The British regiments which stood against the front of the mass, drawn up three deep, kept up an incessant rolling fire on the enemy ; while those on either side, inclining forwards and directing their fire against both flanks of the column, soon occasioned so frightful a carnage that even the intrepidity of the imperial veterans sank under the trial, and the whole broke and fell back in confusion. On rushed Campbell's division, supported by two regiments of Spanish infantry and one of cavalry, who were inspired with unwonted steadiness by the example of their allies, and pushing the disorganised mass before them, completed their discomfiture, and took ten pieces of cannon.² At the same time, Ruffin and Villatte's divisions were descried marching across the valley on the

41.
Heroic valour of the British on their right.

² *Kansler*, 538. *Well. Desp.* July 29, 1809. *Gurw.* iv. 506. *Vict. et Conq.* xix. 287, 289.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

enemy's extreme right, in order to turn, by the foot of the Sierra de Montalban, that blood-stained hill which they had in vain sought to carry by assault. Wellington immediately ordered the 1st German hussars and 23d dragoons to charge the column in the bottom of the valley.

42.
Desperate
charge of
cavalry on
the left.

On they went at a canter, but soon came to a hollow cleft which lay right across their path, and which it seemed impossible to cross. The veteran German, Arentschild, with characteristic coolness, reined up his men on the edge of the hollow ; but Seymour, at the head of the 23d, with true English hardihood, plunged headlong down, and though half of his men fell over each other in wild confusion in the bottom, where Seymour was wounded, the remainder under Ponsonby, coming up by twos and threes, charged right on, and disregarding the fire of Villatte's columns, through which they passed, fell with inexpressible fury on Strolz's brigade of chasseurs in the rear, which, unable to resist the shock, opened its ranks to let them through. The heroic British dragoons, however, after this marvellous charge, were assailed, when blown and disordered by success, by a regiment of Polish lancers and a body of Westphalian light horse, and broken with great slaughter ; the survivors, not half of those who went into action, found shelter on the broken ground behind Bassecourt's division of Spanish infantry on the mountains beyond.¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xix.
287, 289.
Nap. II. 401,
403. Kauler,
538. Well.
Desp. July
29, Gurw. iv.
506.

43.
Imminent
danger in the
centre.

While these terrible conflicts were going on upon the two wings of the army, the centre, where Sherbrooke commanded, and the German Legion and Guards were placed, was exposed to a still severer trial. The great batteries, mounting fifty guns, which there stood right opposite to the British line, at the distance of only half cannon-shot, made fearful chasms in their ranks ; and the English guns, greatly inferior both in number and weight of metal, could make no adequate reply. Under cover of this fearful storm, Lapisse's division crossed the ravine in their front, and, ascending the opposite hill concealed by the smoke, got close to the British line, and already set up the shouts of victory. They were received, however, by a close and well-directed volley, followed by a general rush with the bayonet, which instantly threw

the assailants back in great confusion ; and the Guards, following fast on their heels, not only drove them down the hill, but crossed the rivulet at the bottom, and were soon seen in disorderly array streaming up the opposite bank. Here, however, they met the enemy's reserve, who advanced in close order through the throng ; powerful batteries, firing grape and canister, tore down whole ranks at every discharge on one flank, and some regiments of cavalry threatened the other. The Guards, thus sorely pressed, gave way and fled in confusion ; the disorder quickly spread to the Germans on their flank, and the whole British centre appeared broken.¹

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

¹ Jom. iii.
347, 348.
Vict. et Conq.
xix. 286, 287.
Gurw. iv. 508.

The danger was imminent ; but Wellington, who had foreseen the consequences of the gallant but inconsiderate advance of the household troops, had provided the means of restoring the combat. Instantly pushing forward the 48th regiment, which was in reserve, he directed it against the right flank of the French, who, in their turn, were somewhat disordered by success. When this gallant regiment got into the throng, and began to ascend the slope beyond the stream, it was so beset by the crowd of fugitives, that it became necessary to open the ranks to let them through : but immediately closing again, it advanced in beautiful array against the flank of the pursuing French, and, by a destructive volley, compelled them to halt. The Guards and Germans immediately rallied, faced about, and renewed their fire ; while Cotton's brigade of light cavalry having come up on the other flank at the same time, the advance of the French was effectually checked in the centre. This was their last effort ; their columns now drew off in good order, and retired across the Alberche, three miles in the rear, which was passed in the night. Shortly after the firing ceased, a frightful incident occurred : the grass, dried by the excessive heat, accidentally took fire, and, the flames spreading rapidly over part of the field, scorched cruelly numbers of the wounded of both armies.²

44.
And final
victory.

¹ Wel. Desp.
Gurw. iv. 508.
Nap. ii. 403,
406. Vict. et
Conq. xix.
286, 288.
Jom. iii. 347,
348.

Such was the glorious battle of Talavera—the first for a century past in which the English had been brought to contend on a great scale with the French, and which in its lustre equalled, in its ultimate effects exceeded, the far-famed days of Cressy and Azincourt. Two-and-twenty

45.
Results of the
action.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Kausler,
539. Nap. II.
405, 406.
Well. Re-
turns, Ann.
Reg. 1809.
App. to
Chron. Jom.
iii. 348.

46.
Great effect
of this battle
on public
opinion in
Europe.

thousand British had engaged for two successive days, and finally defeated, above forty-five thousand French; for the aid which the Spaniards afforded in the battle was very trifling, and not more than ten thousand of the enemy, including the King's guard, remained to watch their lines in the olive woods of Talavera, who never fired a shot. Seventeen pieces of cannon, several tumbrils, and some hundred prisoners, taken in fair fight, were the proud trophies of this hard-fought action. The loss on both sides was enormous; but greater on that of the French than the British, owing to their much superior numbers and their system of attack in close column. The latter lost 6268 in the two days: that of the French is now ascertained, from the returns in the French War-office, to have been 8794.¹

"This battle," says Jomini, "at once restored the reputation of the British army, which during a century had declined. It was now ascertained that the English infantry could dispute the palm with the best in Europe." In vain the mercantile spirit, which looks for gain in every transaction, and the virulence of faction, which has ever accompanied the noblest events in history, fastened on this far-famed field, complained of the subsequent retreat, and asked for durable results from the laurels of Talavera. These cold or selfish calculations were answered by the exulting throb of every British heart; the results asked for were found in the subsequent glorious career and long-continued security of England. Far from every generous bosom be that frigid spirit which would measure the importance of events only by their immediate gains, and estimate at nothing the lasting effect of elevation of national feeling! Character is the true strength of nations: historic glory is their best inheritance. When the time shall come that the British heart no longer thrills at the name of Talavera, its fruit will indeed be lost, for the last hour of the British empire will have struck.

On the day following the battle, General Craufurd, with three thousand fresh troops, joined the English army, and replaced nearly half of those who had been disabled in the battle. This gallant band had, at the distance of nearly sixty miles from the field of battle, met several Spanish

runaways from the action of the 27th, who told them the English army was defeated and Lord Wellington killed. Induced only to press on the more eagerly by this intelligence, Craufurd, after giving his men a few hours' rest, and withdrawing fifty of the weakest from the ranks, hurried on with the utmost expedition with the remainder, and reached Talavera at eleven on the morning of the 29th, having passed over, in regular order, *sixty-two English miles* in the preceding twenty-six hours. This march deserves to be noted as the most rapid made by any foot-soldiers of any nation during the whole war, as that made by Lord Lake with the English cavalry, before the battle of Furruckabad, was the extreme stretch of horsemen.* But, notwithstanding this seasonable reinforcement, Wellington had soon sufficient cause for anxiety; for, on the 2d August, as he was preparing to march to Madrid, intelligence arrived that Soult, with a very large force, had penetrated without opposition through the Puerto de Banos, the Spaniards stationed in that important pass having abandoned it without firing a shot. From thence he had entered Placencia, directly in the British rear and on the line of their communications with Lisbon, with thirty-four thousand men.¹

This formidable and unlooked-for apparition was the result of the junction of the whole forces of Soult, Ney, and Mortier, in consequence of the pressing orders of Joseph; who, after uniting near Salamanca, had descended by forced marches through Leon and the mountains forming the northern barrier of Estremadura, and appeared just in time to interfere with decisive effect upon the vital operations on the banks of the Tagus. Their concentration at this crisis was owing to a very singular and fortuitous chain of events. Soult, after he had brought the ghastly crowd which formed the remains of his once splendid corps to Lugo, and delivered the garrison imprisoned there by the Galicians, deeming himself not strong enough to effect any thing among the rugged mountains of that province, and having no magazines or stores to recruit his troops, resolved to make the best of his way into Old Castile. He accordingly set out in the end of June for Benevente and Zamora, and put his

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

47.

March of
Soult, Ney,
and Mortier
into Well-
ington's rear.

¹ Wellington
to Lord Ber-
esford,
August 4.
Gurw. iv.
531, 533.
Nap. ii. 412,
413.

48.

Events in
Galicia and
Asturias
which had
led to this
force assail-
ing Well-
ington.

June 27.

* *Ante*, Chap. xlix. § 84.

CHAP.

LXII.

1809.

troops into cantonments on the Esla in the beginning of July. Meanwhile Ney, thus left in Galicia, had experienced a variety of disasters. After the conference at Lugo with Soult, he had moved towards Vigo, with a view to regain possession of that important fortress and seaport, and stifle the insurrection which, from the aid of several ships of war in the harbour, was there daily becoming more formidable. To reach it, however, he required to pass the bridge of St Payo, in the valley of Soto-Mayor, where the road crosses the river Octaven. The Spaniards, ten thousand strong, with several pieces of heavy cannon, were there entrenched in a strong position on the opposite side of the river; the bridge was cut; and several gunboats manned by English sailors at its mouth, a short way farther down, prevented the passage from being turned in that direction.¹

¹ Belm. i. 80,
83. Tor. ii.
349, 353.
Nap. ii. 324,
326.

49.
Operations of
Ney in the
north, who
evacuates
Galicia.

June 7.

July 22.

July 30.

June 20.

June 10.

June 15.
² Belm. i. 80,
83. Tor. ii.
349, 353.
Nap. ii. 324,
326.

Driven thus to carry the passage by main force, Ney led on his troops gallantly to the attack; but the well-sustained fire of the Spaniards defeated all his efforts. He renewed the assault next day with no better success, and, despairing of forcing the position, retired with the loss of three hundred men. Discouraged by this reverse, and finding himself abandoned by Soult in a country swarming with enemies, and extremely difficult for military operations, Ney resolved to abandon Galicia. He was the more confirmed in this resolution, from the opinion which he entertained that he had been scandalously deserted and left to perish by Soult. Under the influence of these mingled feelings of disappointment and indignation, he abandoned Ferrol and Corunna, and, collecting all his detachments, evacuated the whole province, and reached Astorga in the end of July. Asturias had previously been evacuated by Kellerman and Bonnet, who had arrived at Valladolid on the 20th June, in order to co-operate in the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, which at that period was in contemplation, after Santander had been carried by assault by the Spaniards some days before, and retaken, with great slaughter, by the latter of these generals. Thus, by a singular combination of circumstances, at the time when Wellington made his grand advance towards Madrid, Soult, Kellerman, and Bonnet, with above thirty thousand men,² were assembled in the north of Leon,

ready to descend on his line of communication with Lisbon, and Ney was rapidly following in their footsteps from the extremity of Galicia.

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

Wellington, thus menaced by a superior force in rear, at the same time that an army defeated, but still greater in number, lay in his front, had still the advantage of a central position between the two; and, if the quality of the whole allied forces had been alike, and he had commanded the whole, he had the means of striking the same redoubtable blows on the right and left, with a force inferior upon the whole, but, including the Spanish troops, superior to either taken singly, which Napoleon dealt out in 1796 to the converging Austrian columns which descended from the Alps for the relief of Mantua. This was the more feasible, as Joseph's army, which fought at Talavera, had been divided after the action; the King, with Sebastiani's corps, the reserve and royal guards, having marched towards Madrid, now threatened on the one side by Venegas, who had occupied Aranjuez and passed Toledo, and on the other by Sir Robert Wilson, who was within seven leagues of the capital, and in communication with it. Doubtless, if Wellington had been at the head of fifty thousand British troops, he would have attempted, and probably with success, that resolute game.¹

50.
Wellington's
plan to resist
the attack.

¹ Gurw. iv.
524, 530.
Tor. iii. 48.
Nap. II. 415,
416. Jom. iii.
349.

But though the allied force at Talavera was of that numerical strength, dear-bought experience had demonstrated that no reliance could be placed on any part of it in the field, except the twenty thousand English soldiers. The British general and his whole troops had now seen the Spanish army, and the illusion which had formerly prevailed on the subject had been dispelled. Their artillery, it was ascertained, was for the most part well trained, and had rendered good service on some important occasions; but their cavalry was wretched, and their infantry, though courageous when standing still resisting an attack, totally unfit to perform movements under fire or in presence of the enemy, without falling into confusion. In these circumstances, it was apparent that a prudent defensive policy was the only one which promised a chance of success with an army in great part composed of such troops; but this was precisely the system which the ignorance and presumption of the Spanish generals

51.
He marches
against Soult,
Ney, and
Mortier.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Well. Desp.
Gurw. iv. 524,
534. Jom. iii.
349, 350.
Nap. ii. 415,
417. Tor. iii.
48, 49.

rendered them incapable of adopting. Wellington, therefore, to avoid being attacked both in front and rear at the same time, deemed it necessary to divide the allied army; and he offered to General Cuesta either to stay with the wounded at Talavera, or march to the attack of Soult, as he chose. The Spanish general preferred remaining where he was; and Wellington, in consequence, set out from Talavera on the 3d August, taking with him the whole British army, and leaving about two thousand of their wounded in the hospital at Talavera, under charge of the Castilian army.¹

52.
Cuesta
abandons
Talavera and
the English
wounded.

Hardly, however, had the last of the troops left the blood-stained banks of the Alberche, when intelligence arrived that Cuesta was making preparations to abandon Talavera and the English wounded; and at five o'clock Wellington received official intimation that the Spanish general had actually put his intention in execution, and was moving after the British army, leaving nearly half the wounded to their fate. Apprehension of being attacked, at the same time, both by Victor and Soult, was assigned as the motive of this proceeding. But the real fact was, that the Spanish general entertained well-grounded apprehensions of the firmness of his own troops, when left to defend an important position against such an enemy as he had seen fight at Talavera, and he felt no chance of safety but in close proximity to the British force. Advices were received at the same time of the arrival of Soult at Naval Moral, on the high-road leading to the bridge of Almarez, and that his army, which was hourly increasing, was already thirty thousand strong. In these circumstances, Wellington wisely resolved to alter his line of march, and, quitting the road by Almarez and Alcantara, to move across to the bridge of Arsobizbo, and take up a defensive position on the line of the Tagus. This resolution was instantly acted upon; the troops defiled to the left, and passed the bridge in safety: the Spaniards rapidly followed after them; and the bulk of the allied army reassembled at Deleitosa, on the south of the Tagus, on the following day. The bridges of Arsobizbo and Almarez were destroyed, and a rear-guard of Spaniards, with thirty guns, left to defend the former passage. But the French corps, in great strength,

August 3.

August 4.

August 5.

August 7.

were now appearing on the banks of the Tagus: Soult, with three corps, mustering thirty-four thousand men, was in the neighbourhood of Almaraz; and Victor, with twenty-five thousand, attacked and defeated the Spaniards at Arsobizbo, by crossing the Tagus at a ford a little above the broken bridge, with eight hundred horse, and captured all their guns. Nothing now appeared capable of preventing the junction of the whole French armies, and the attack of sixty thousand excellent troops on the allied army, already suffering from extreme want of provisions, exhausted by fatigue, and little capable of withstanding so formidable a force.¹

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

August 8.

¹ Tor. iii. 50.
52. Belm. i.
94. Jom. iii.
349, 355.
Nap. ii. 417,
426.

But the object of delivering Madrid being accomplished, and the allies driven to the south of the Tagus, the French generals had no inclination for farther active operations. Their soldiers, worn out with continued marching, stood much in need of repose; the recollection of Talavera checked the hope of any successful enterprise to the south of the Tagus, while its shores were guarded by the victors in that hard-fought field; and the great accumulation of troops around its banks exposed them, equally with the allies, to extreme suffering from want of provisions. These considerations pressing equally on both sides, produced a general separation of force, and suspension of operations, after the combat of Arsobizbo. Cuesta, disgusted with his reverses, resigned the command, and his army was broken into two parts; ten thousand were despatched towards Toledo to reinforce Venegas, who was now bombarding that city, and twenty thousand, under the command of the Duke d'Albuquerque, remained in the neighbourhood of the English army, in the mountains which separate the valley of the Tagus from that of the Guadiana. The French armies also separated: Joseph returned with his guards, Dessolles' division, and Sebastiani's corps, to drive Venegas from Toledo; while Soult and Mortier remained at Talavera, Oropesa, and Placencia; and Ney retraced his steps to Leon and the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo. But so favourable an opportunity never again occurred of breaking down the English power in the Peninsula. Napoleon never ceased to lament to the last hour of his life that the advice of Soult had not been followed,² who wished to take advan-

53.
The French
generals
separate their
forces.

August 12.

² Nap. ii.
417, 426.
Belm. i. 94,
95. Jom. iii.
349, 357.
Tor. iii. 50,
53.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

tage of this concentration of five corps, numbering in all ninety thousand combatants, in the valley of the Tagus, and march at once on Coria and Lisbon. He in consequence soon after dismissed Jourdan from his situation of major-general to Joseph, and conferred that important situation on Soult.

54.
Movements
of the allies
after the
separation of
the French.

Aug. 8.

The justice of this opinion appeared in a still more striking manner, from the proof which was soon afforded of the inefficient character of those corps threatening Madrid, which had caused such alarm in the mind of Joseph, as to lead him to break up the noble force which he had latterly accumulated in the valley of the Tagus. Ney, in his way back from Placencia, met unexpectedly, in the Puerto de Banos, the division of Sir Robert Wilson, consisting of three thousand Portuguese and as many Spaniards, who were wending their way amidst rocks and precipices, from the neighbourhood of Madrid, to the Portuguese frontier, with which, being ignorant of the strength of the enemy, he endeavoured to stop the French corps. The result of a combat so unequal might easily have been anticipated; Wilson was, after a stout resistance of three hours, dislodged and thrown back on the Portuguese frontier, with the loss of a thousand men. More important operations took place at the same time in the plains of La Mancha. Venegas, during the concentration of the French forces at Talavera, had not only with one of his divisions occupied Aranjuez, with its royal palace, but with two others was besieging and bombarding Toledo. No sooner was Joseph relieved, by the retreat of the English from Talavera, from the necessity of remaining in force on the Alberche, than he moved off, with Sebastiani's corps and Dessolles' division, to attack him.¹

¹ Tor. iii. 56,
59. Jom. iii.
352, 354.
Balm. i. 95.
Gurw. v. 66.

5.
Defeat of the
Spaniards at
Almonacid.
Aug. 11.

Deceived as to the strength of his adversary, whose force he imagined did not exceed fourteen thousand men, the Spanish general resolved to give battle, and awaited the enemy in a good position at Almonacid. The French had twenty-four thousand foot and four thousand horse in the battle—the Spaniards about an equal force; but the difference in the quality of the troops in the opposite armies soon decided the contest. Encouraged by the ardour of his men, who demanded, with loud cries, to

be led on to the combat, Sebastiani commenced the attack without waiting for the arrival of Dessolles' division; a division of Poles, under Sulkoski, attacked a hill, the key of the position, on which the Spanish left rested, while the Germans under Laval assailed it in flank. The crest of the mount was speedily won, and the Spanish left fell back on their reserve, consisting of the soldiers of Baylen; but they rallied the fugitives and stood firm; while Venegas, charging the victorious French in flank, threw them into confusion, and drove them back in great disorder. Victory seemed to declare in favour of the Spaniards, when the arrival of Dessolles and Joseph, with the reserve, restored the combat. Assailed both in front and flank by fresh forces, when still disordered by success, the Spanish troops, after a sharp conflict, fell back; the old Moorish castle of Almonacid, where the reserve was stationed, was carried after a bloody combat; and Venegas, utterly routed, was glad to seek refuge in the Sierra Morena, with the loss of thirty-five guns, nearly all his ammunition, and six thousand killed, wounded, and prisoners. But the loss of two thousand men on the side of the victors, proved with what unwonted steadiness the Spaniards had fought on this occasion.¹

For nearly a month after their retreat to the southern bank of the Tagus, the English army remained undisturbed in their position on that river, with their headquarters at Deleitosa. Wellington, informed of the return of Ney to Salamanca, was even preparing to resume offensive operations on its northern bank; with which view, he was busied in repairing the broken arch over the Tagus at Almaraz, when the total failure on the part of the Spaniards to provide subsistence for the English troops, rendered a retreat to Badajoz, and the vicinity of their own magazines, a matter of absolute necessity. From the moment the English troops entered Spain, they had experienced the wide difference between the promises and the performance of the Spanish authorities; and we have the authority of Wellington for the assertion, that, if the Junta of Truxillo had kept their contract for furnishing two hundred and forty thousand rations to the English army, the allies would, on the

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Gurw. vi.
66. Tor. iii.
56, 59. Jom.
iii. 352, 354.
Nap. ii. 431,
433. Belm. i.
95.

56.
Sufferings of
the English
army, and
their return
to the
Portuguese
frontier.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

¹ Gurw. v.
355.

night of the 27th July, have slept in Madrid.¹ But, for the month which followed the battle of Talavera, their distresses in this respect had been indeed excessive, and had reached a height which was altogether insupportable. Notwithstanding the most energetic remonstrances from Wellington, he had got hardly any supplies from the Spanish generals or authorities, from the time of his entering Spain; Cuesta had refused to lend him ninety mules to draw his artillery, though at the time he had several hundreds in his army doing nothing; the troops of all arms were literally starving; during a month which followed the junction of the two armies on the 22d July, they had not received ten days' bread; on many days they got only a little meat, without salt, on others nothing at all; the cavalry and artillery horses had not received, in the same time, three deliveries of forage, and in consequence a thousand horses had died, and seven hundred were on the sick list.²

² Well. Desp.
Gurw. v. 10,
11, 12, 22,
24, 52, 57.
Nap. II. 434.

57.
Total inefficiency of the Spanish troops and authorities.

These privations were the more exasperating, that, during the greater part of the time, the Spanish troops received their rations regularly both for men and horses. The composition of the Spanish troops, and their conduct at Talavera and on other occasions, was not such as to inspire the least confidence in their capability of resisting the attack of the French armies. Their men, hardly disciplined and without uniform, threw away their arms and dispersed the moment they experienced any reverse, and permitted the whole weight of the contest to fall on the English soldiers, who had no similar means of escape. These causes had gradually produced an estrangement, and at length a positive animosity, between the privates and officers of the two armies; an angry correspondence took place between their respective generals, which widened the breach; and at last Wellington, finding all his representations disregarded, intimated his resolution to withdraw the British troops to the frontiers of Portugal, where they might be maintained from their own magazines. The Spanish authorities, upon this, made the most earnest protestations of their wish to supply the wants of the British soldiers, and offered to divide the magazines at Truxillo with them, or even put them entirely at their disposal. But Wellington had ascer-

tained that this boasted resource would not supply his troops for one day ; the soldiers were daily becoming more sickly ; and justly deeming the very existence of his army at stake if these evils any longer continued, the English general, on the 22d August, gave orders for retiring across the mountains into the valley of the Guadiana, where he took up his cantonments in the end of August, the headquarters being at Badajoz. But the malaria of that pestilential district, in the autumnal months, soon produced the most deleterious effect on the health of the soldiers. The noxious vapours which exhaled from the beds of the rivers, joined to the cessation of active habits, and consequent circulation of the bilious secretion through the system, rendered fevers alarmingly frequent ; seven thousand men were soon in hospital, of whom nearly two-thirds died, and the sands of the Guadiana proved more fatal to the army than the sword of the enemy.¹

Being perfectly aware of the inability of the Spanish armies to contend with the French veterans, Wellington now earnestly counselled their leaders to adopt a different system of warfare ; to avoid all general actions, encamp always in strong positions, and fortify them, when in the neighbourhood of the enemy ; and make the best use of those numerous mountain chains which intersect the country in every direction, and afforded the means of avoiding the numerous and terrible imperial horse.² An example soon occurred of the beneficial effects which would have resulted from the general adoption of this system. Ney's corps, which had been delivered over to General Marchand, when that marshal himself returned into France, lay in the plains of Leon, near Ciudad Rodrigo ; and the army formerly commanded by the Marquis Romana, having at length emerged from the Galician mountains, and arrived in the same neighbourhood, the French general adopted the resolution of bringing it to action. After a variety of marches, the Duke del Parque, who had just been appointed to the command of the army, took post in the strong position of Tamanes, in the mountains on the northern side of the Puerto de Banos, where he was attacked, in the end of October, by Marchand, with twelve thousand men. The French troops commenced the attack with all their wonted spirit,

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

August 22.

August 22.

¹ Well. Desp.
Gurw. v. 10,
11, 12, 22,
24, 33, 62,
67, 63, 69,
71. Nap. II.
434, 446.

58.
Success of
the Spaniards
at Tamanes.

² Gurw. v.
345.

Oct. 24.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

anticipating an easy victory, and at first gained considerable success. But the main body of the Spanish army, trained in the campaign of Galicia to a mountain warfare, falling back to their strong ground, made a vigorous resistance, and from behind inaccessible rocks showered down a murderous fire on the assailants. After a sharp conflict, the unusual spectacle was exhibited of the French eagles receding before the Spanish standards, and Marchand drew off with the loss of fifteen hundred men and one gun; while the Duke del Parque gave decisive proof of the reality of his success, by advancing immediately after the action, and taking unresisted possession of Salamanca, with twenty-five thousand men.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
358. Gurw.
v. 362. Nap.
iii. 65, 66.
Tor. iii. 134,
137.

59.
Events
which led to
the battle of
Ocana.

This transient gleam of success, instead of inducing the Spaniards to persevere in the cautious policy to which it had been owing, and which Wellington had so strenuously recommended, inspired them with a presumptuous self-confidence which proved their total ruin. The success gained by the Duke del Parque at Tames, and the junction of his followers to those of Ballasteros, who had come down from Asturias with eight thousand fresh troops, gave such disquietude to the French, from their close proximity to their principal line of communication with Bayonne, that they deemed it necessary to withdraw part of Mortier's corps from Estremadura. This inspired the Central Junta with the hope that they might now undertake, with some prospect of success, their long-cherished project of recovering Madrid. Areizaga, accordingly, who had been appointed to the command of the army of Venegas, which, by great exertions, and the junction of the main body of Cuesta's force, had been raised to fifty thousand men, of whom seven thousand were cavalry, with sixty pieces of cannon, moved forward in the beginning of November from the foot of the Sierra Morena, and soon arrived in the plain of OCANA, where Milhaud lay with the advanced guard of Sebastiani's corps.²

Nov. 3.
² Tor. iii.
141. Nap.
iii. 79, 80.
Jom. iii. 359.

60.
Position
taken up by
the Spanish
general there.

Encouraged by their great superiority of numbers, the Spanish horse fell with great vigour on the French division; but Milhaud was at the head of those redoubtable cuirassiers who had appeared with glory in all the great battles of Europe since the accession of Napoleon; and

after a short encounter, he routed the enemy with severe loss, and contrived to keep his ground in front of Aranjuez and the Tagus, till the main body of the army came up to his assistance. In effect, Joseph soon arrived with part of the corps of Soult and Mortier, and the royal guards, which raised his force to thirty thousand men, of whom five thousand were horsemen and lancers, with fifty guns. The Spanish general, whose ignorance of war was equal to his presumption, now perceived his danger, and took post on the best ground within his reach to give battle; but it was essentially defective, and its character proved one great cause of the unheard-of disaster which followed. The left wing, fifteen thousand strong, was placed *behind* a deep ravine, which it could not cross without falling into confusion; the centre was in advance of the town of Ocana, and the right *in front* of the same ravine, which ran along the whole line; so that the one wing was without a retreat in case of disaster, the other without the means of attacking the enemy in the event of success.¹

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

Nov. 12.

¹ Nap. iii. 79.
80. Jom. iii.
359, 360.
Tor. iii. 144.
Vlot. et Conq.
xix. 302.

Totally unequal to such a crisis, Areizaga took post at break of day in one of the steeples of Ocana, behind his centre, where he remained during the whole battle, neither giving orders nor sending succour to any part of his line. Thus left to themselves, however, his troops at first made a gallant defence. Laval's division was the first which advanced to the attack, preceded by Senarmont's terrible battery of thirty guns, the effect of which had been so severely experienced by the Russians at Friedland. The Spanish troops in the centre, however, stood firm, and, with loud shouts, awaited the onset of the enemy; while their guns in position there kept up a heavy and destructive cannonade upon the advancing columns. Such was the weight of their fire, that the leading ranks of their assailants hesitated and fell back. Soult and Mortier, perceiving the disorder, instantly hastened to the spot, and brought up Gerard's division; and, opening their ranks to let the fugitives through, presented a front of fresh troops, in admirable order, to the combat. The prompt succour thus afforded restored the battle, and soon gave the French a glorious victory.² The right wing of the Spaniards, severely pressed by Sebastiani's corps,

61.
Total defeat
of the
Spaniards.

² Gurw. v.
363. Nap.
iii. 80, 82.
Jom. iii. 359.
Tor. iii. 144,
146.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

was compelled to retreat behind the ravine, in front of which it stood at the commencement of the battle ; while the dense lines of the Spanish left, posted behind the impassable gully in their front, were compelled to remain inactive spectators of the rout, arising from the whole enemy's force being thrown on their centre and right.

62.
Entire wreck
of the
Spanish
army.

The troops which had repulsed Laval were compelled to retire through the town of Ocana, where Areizaga was chased from his steeple, and instantly took to flight. On the right, Sebastiani, by penetrating between the town and the extreme Spanish right, cut off six thousand men, and obliged them to surrender. The line, now broken in every part, rushed in wild disorder towards the rear, followed by the terrible French dragoons, who soon drove ten thousand men into a space behind Ocana, having only one outlet behind, where the throng was soon so great, that escape was impossible, and almost the whole were made prisoners. The army, upon this, dispersed in all directions, while the French cavalry, spreading out from Ocana like a fan, thundered in pursuit over the wide and desolate plains which extend to the south towards the Sierra Morena. Twenty thousand prisoners, forty-five pieces of cannon, and the whole ammunition of the army, were the fruits of this glorious battle, which lasted only four hours, and in which the victors fired only seventeen hundred cannon-shot. Wearied with collecting prisoners, the French at length merely took their arms from the fugitives, desiring them to go home, telling them that war was a trade for which they were not fit ; and such was the wreck of the army, which lately numbered fifty thousand combatants, that, ten days after the battle, Areizaga could not collect a single battalion to defend the passes of the Sierra Morena.¹

¹ Jom. 359.
361. Well.
Desp. Gur. v.
363. Nap.
iii. 80, 84.
Vict. et
Conq. xix.
302, 304.
Tor. iii. 144,
146.

63.
Rout of the
Duke del
Parque at
Alba de
Tormes.

This astonishing victory would doubtless have been immediately followed by the passing of that celebrated range, and probably the total extinction of all regular resistance on the part of the Spaniards, had it not been that the position of the English army at Badajoz rendered it imprudent to enter those defiles, through which it might be difficult to retrace their steps, in the event of a powerful force from Estremadura advancing to cut off the communication with Madrid. Joseph, therefore, highly

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

elated with a victory which he hoped would at length put an end to the contest, returned with the greater part of his army in triumph to the capital, where his government was now established on a solid basis. All the elements of resistance in New Castile being now destroyed, the whole revenue of the province was collected, and the administration conducted by the intrusive government. A similar catastrophe soon after gave them a like command over the population and the resources of Leon and Old Castile. In that province, the Duke del Parque, finding the force in his front considerably diminished by the collection of the French troops to oppose the incursion of Areizaga to Ocana, advanced towards Medina del Rio Seco, in order to assist in the general movement on the capital. He attacked a body of ten thousand French on the 23d of November, and gained considerable success. Nov. 23. But, in two days after, the enemy was strongly reinforced by some of the troops who had combated at Ocana, and who immediately spread the news of that dreadful event, as much to the elevation of the one as to the depression of the other army. The Spanish general, upon this disastrous intelligence, immediately retreated; but his troops were so extremely disheartened by this great defeat in the south, that on the following day, when Kellerman, with a body of horse, came up with the army near Alba de Tormes, the Spanish cavalry fled the moment the enemy Nov. 25. appeared, without striking a blow. The infantry, however, stood firm and made a stout resistance, which enabled the Duke to effect his retreat without any considerable loss, notwithstanding the repeated charges of the French horse upon his flank. But such was the depressed state of the troops, that at daybreak on the following morning, when a French patrol entered the town in which they were lying, the entire Spanish army took to flight and separated in all directions, leaving their whole artillery, ammunition, and carriages of every sort, in the hands of the enemy. So complete was their dispersion, that for some days the Duke del Parque was left literally without an army. But the Spanish troops, whose constancy in adversity was as worthy of admiration as their unsteadiness in the field was remarkable, again rallied round the standard of their chief,¹ and in a fortnight the

¹ Nap. iii.
86, 89.
Vict. et
Conq. xix.
305, 308.
Tor. 147,
151. Well.
Desp. Gur.
v. 364.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

Duke, who had retired to the mountains to the south of Ciudad Rodrigo, again found himself at the head of twelve or fifteen thousand men, but for the most part unarmed, without cannon or ammunition, and literally famishing from want.

64.
Transfer of
the British
army to the
frontier of
Beira.

As these terrible blows had dispersed the only forces in the field which the Spaniards had, worthy of the name of armies ; and as the event had now clearly proved what he had long foreseen, not only that they were incapable of maintaining themselves in the field against the French, but that, by their inability to perform movements in presence of the enemy, they could not be relied upon to take part in any combined system of operations, Wellington perceived clearly that henceforth the protection of Portugal must form his main object, and that, if the deliverance of the Peninsula was ever to be effected, it must be by the forces which rested on the fulcrum of that kingdom. He wisely resolved, therefore, to move his army from the banks of the Guadiana, where it had already suffered so severely from the autumnal fevers, to the frontier of the province of Beira, where it might at once recover its health upon higher and hilly ground, guard the principal road to the Portuguese capital from the centre of Spain, and watch the formidable force, now nearly thirty-six thousand strong, which the French had collected in the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo. In the beginning of December, therefore, the English general, after having repaired to Seville, and concerted measures with the Junta there, moved his army to the neighbourhood of Almeida and the banks of the Aguada, leaving only a comparatively small force at Elvas and in the Alentejo, to co-operate with the Spaniards in Estremadura ; and at the same time commenced those formidable lines at Torres Vedras, and in front of Lisbon, which he had long contemplated, and which at length permanently arrested the hitherto irresistible torrent of French conquest.¹

¹ Well. Desp.
Gurw. v. 364,
and Desp.
20th October
1809, v. 234,
240. Jom.
iii. 363.

65.
Disastrous
state of the
Spanish
affairs at this
period.

These movements closed the bloody and eventful campaign of 1809 in the Peninsula ; and, certainly, never since the beginning of the world had a war occurred presenting more objects worthy of the admiration of the patriot, the study of the statesman, and the observation of the soldier. The sieges of Saragossa and Gerona, where

forty thousand ill-disciplined troops, supported by the heroic inhabitants of these towns, had inflicted nearly as great a loss upon the French as the whole military force of Austria had done in the field of Wagram, had afforded memorable examples of what could be effected by the feelings of religious and patriotic duty, when brought into the conflict under circumstances where the usual advantages of discipline and prowess could not immediately decide the contest. On the other hand, the long train of disasters which the Spaniards had since incurred in every other quarter, terminating in the frightful catastrophe of Ocana, had demonstrated, in equally striking colours, the total inability of undisciplined troops, even when animated by the most ardent zeal in behalf of their independence, and the greatest possible advantages of a mountainous country, to withstand in the field the attacks of a powerful, disciplined, and well-directed enemy.

That the Spanish people were brave, was evident from the courage with which they withstood, and on many occasions repulsed, the first attacks of the French veterans; that they were hardy, was demonstrated by the privations which they underwent with unshaken constancy; that they were zealous in the cause of their country, was clear from the multitudes who in every quarter thronged to its standards; that they were enduring in adversity, was manifest from the unparalleled tenacity with which they maintained the contest, after reverses and under circumstances which would have overwhelmed the resistance of any other people. Yet, with all these admirable qualities, they had every where proved, in the end, unfortunate, and could not point to one single province rescued by their efforts from the grasp of the enemy. It was evident that the deliverance of Galicia and Asturias was to be ascribed, not to the arms of Romana and the mountaineers of those provinces, brave and indomitable as they were, but to the disciplined battalions of Wellington, which first, by depriving Soult's corps of all its equipments, compelled him to evacuate that province, and afterwards, by threatening Madrid, forced the French generals to concentrate all their forces for the defence of the capital. A memorable example to succeeding ages, both of the astonishing

66.
 Reflections
 on the causes
 to which it
 had been
 owing.

CHAP.
 LXII.
 1809.

effects of patriotic ardour in supporting, when properly directed, the cause of national independence, and of the total inadequacy of mere popular efforts to effect national deliverance from serious dangers, if not directed by a strong government, and resting on the foundation of national forces, previously disciplined and prepared for the contest.

67.
 Wellington's
 policy in con-
 sequence.

It was a clear perception of these truths, joined to the comparatively small force which he had at his disposal, and the extraordinary difficulty either of providing men or money in Great Britain for additional troops, which was the ruling principle in the campaigns of Wellington, that are to form so brilliant a part in the subsequent chapters of this history. With a force seldom exceeding thirty thousand British soldiers, and which could rarely bring, after the usual deductions, above twenty-five thousand into the field, he had to maintain a contest with six French corps, the whole of which, if necessary, could be brought to bear against his army, and which could bring into the field, after amply providing for their rear and communications, at least one hundred and fifty thousand combatants. The Spanish armies, at different periods during the campaign that was past, had indeed been numerous, their officers daring, and many had been the reproaches cast upon the English general for at last declining to join in the rash operations which terminated in the overthrows of Ocana and Alba de Tormes. But it was now manifest to all the world that any such operation could have terminated in nothing but disaster, and that, if the English corps of twenty-four thousand men had advanced in the close of the year towards the Spanish capital, the consequence would have been, that the French generals would immediately have concentrated their whole forces against it, as they had done against Sir John Moore, and that, if it escaped destruction at all, it could only have been by a retreat as calamitous and destructive as that to Corunna. The undisciplined state of the Spanish armies rendered this a matter of ease; for they were incapable, in the field, of moving to attack the enemy without falling into confusion; and any progress which their desultory bands might make in other provinces during such concentration of their troops, would only expose them to greater

disasters upon the separation of the French forces after the destruction of the English army.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

Immense as were the obstacles with which Wellington had to contend, in striving for the deliverance of the Peninsula with such allies, against such an overwhelming superiority of force, the difficulty became still greater from the different modes in which the respective armies carried on the war. The British, according to the established mode of civilised warfare, at least in modern times, maintained themselves chiefly from magazines in their rear; and when they were obliged to depend upon the supplies of the provinces where the war was carried on, they paid for them just as they would have done in their own country. In consequence of this circumstance, and the distance to which their provisions had to be conveyed, the expense of carrying on war, with even a comparatively inconsiderable force, on the Continent, was severely felt by the British government. Already the cost of even the small army which Wellington headed in Portugal, was about £230,000 a month. The French, on the other hand, by reverting to the old Roman system of making war maintain war, not only felt no additional burden, but experienced the most sensible relief by their armies carrying on hostilities with foreign states. From the moment that his forces entered a hostile territory, it was a fundamental principle of Napoleon's, that they should draw nothing from the French exchequer; and, while the people of Paris were amused with the flattering statements of the moderate expense at which their vast army was maintained, the fact was carefully concealed that the whole troops engaged in foreign service—that is, two-thirds of the whole military establishment of the empire—were paid, fed, and lodged at the expense of the countries where hostilities were going forward. To such a length was this system carried, that we have the authority of the Duke of Wellington for the assertion, that the cost of the pay and hospitals for the French army, in Spain alone, was greater than the sum stated in the budget for the year 1809, as the expense of their whole military establishment.¹

68.
Difficulties with which he had to contend, and differences between the English and French method of carrying on war.

¹ Gurw. vi.
552.

These causes produced a total difference in the modes in which the generals of the two armies were obliged or

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

69.
Effects of
these on
Wellington's
military po-
licy.

enabled to carry on war. The English, paying for every thing which they consumed, found their difficulties and expenses increase the farther they advanced from the coast; and, when they got into the interior of the Peninsula, any considerable failure in their supplies, or any blow struck by the enemy at their communications, threatened them with total ruin. The French, on the other hand, fearlessly plunged into the most desolate provinces, totally regardless of their flanks or rear: and, without magazines or communications of any kind, contrived to wrench from the inhabitants, by the terrors of military execution, ample supplies for a long period, in a country where a British regiment could not find subsistence for a single week. "The mode," says the Duke of Wellington, "in which they provide for their armies is this: they plunder every thing they find in the country; they force from the inhabitants, under pain of death, all that they have in their houses for the consumption of the year, without payment, and are indifferent respecting the consequences to the unfortunate people. Every article, whether of food or raiment, and every animal and vehicle of every description, is considered to belong of right and without payment to the French army; and they require a communication with their rear, only for the purpose of conveying intelligence to and receiving orders from the Emperor."¹

¹ Well. Desp.
Gurw. vii.
233, 299.

70.
And ulti-
mate results
to the two
parties.

It may readily be conceived what advantages an enemy acting on these principles must always possess over another conforming to the good old fashion of taking nothing but what they can pay for. So also will fraud or violence, if directed by talent or supported by power, almost always gain the ascendancy in the first instance in private life, over the unobtrusive efforts of honest industry. But the same moral law is applicable to both: mark the end of these things, alike to the private villain and the imperial robber. What the French military historians call the circumspection and caution of the British general, was the necessary result of those principles of justice and perseverance, which, commencing with the reverses of the Spanish campaign, were destined ere long to rouse mankind in their favour, and lead to the triumph of Vittoria and the Moscow retreat. The energy

and fearlessness which they justly admire in their own generals, were the consequence of the system which, destroying the half of every army in the course of every campaign, was destined in the end to exhaust the military strength of the empire, and bring the powers of Europe in irresistible force to the banks of the Seine.

Notwithstanding all these untoward circumstances, and the difficulties necessarily arising from the co-operation of the armies of three independent kingdoms in one campaign, Wellington, even after the retreat from Talavera, had no fears of the result, and repeatedly wrote, both to the British and the Spanish governments, that he had no doubt he should be able to deliver the Peninsula, if the Spanish generals would only adhere to the cautious system of policy which he so strongly inculcated.* Their course was perfectly clear. It was, to use the mattock and the spade more than the sword or the bayonet; to take advantage of the numerous mountain ranges which the country afforded to shelter their armies, and of the admirable courage of their citizens behind walls to defend their strongholds. In a word, they had nothing to do but to follow the course by which the Scots, on eleven different occasions, had baffled the English armies, numbering from fifty to eighty thousand combatants in each invasion, who had crossed the Tweed; and by which Washington, at every possible disadvantage, at length worked out the independence of the American States. But to this judicious system the ignorance and infatuation of the Central Junta, joined to the presumption and inexperience of their generals, opposed invincible obstacles. No disasters could convince them that they were not superior to the French troops in the open field; and so elated were they by the least success, that no sooner did they see the imperial armies receding before them, than, hurrying from their mountain fastnesses with a rabble almost undisciplined, and without even uniform, they rushed into conflict with the veterans against whom the armies of

CHAP.

LXII.

1809.

71.

Rashness and
folly of the
Spanish
rulers.

* "I declare, that if they had preserved their two armies, or even one of them, the cause was safe. The French could have sent no reinforcements which could have been of any use; time would have been gained; the state of affairs would have improved daily; all the chances were in our favour; and in the first moment of weakness, occasioned by any diversion on the Continent, or by the growing discontent of the French themselves with the war, the French armies must have been driven out of Spain."—WELL. *Despatches*, GURWOOD, v. 335

CHAP.

LXII.

1809.

Austria and Russia had contended in vain. Nothing could be expected from such a system but the result which actually took place; viz. the total destruction of the Spanish armies, and the throwing the whole weight of the contest in future upon the British and Portuguese forces.

72.
Vast effort of
Great Britain
during the
campaign.

And, though the success which attended her efforts had not been proportioned to the magnitude of the exertions which she had made, yet England had no reason to feel ashamed of the part which she had taken in the contest. For the first time since the commencement of the war, she now appeared with troops in the field worthy of her mighty strength; and it affords a marvellous proof of the magnitude of the British resources, that this display should have been made in the seventeenth year of the war. The forces by land and sea which she put forth in this year, were unparalleled. With a fleet of two hundred and forty ships of the line, and nearly eleven hundred vessels of all sizes, she maintained the undisputed command of the waves; blockaded every hostile harbour in Europe; at once chased the Toulon squadron ashore at the mouth of the Rhone, burned the Brest fleet amidst the shallows of Basque Roads, drove the Russian navy under the cannon of Cronstadt, and still found thirty-seven ships of the line wherewith to strike a redoubtable blow at the fleets in the Scheldt. With a hundred thousand regular troops, she maintained her immense colonial empire in every part of the world, and, as it suited her convenience, rooted out the French flag from the last transmarine possessions of her foe: with one hundred and ninety thousand more, she swayed the sceptre of Hindostan, and kept in subjection her seventy millions of Asiatic subjects: with four hundred thousand regular and local militia, she amply provided for the safety of the British islands; while, with another hundred thousand gallant disposable soldiers, she carried on the war with unexampled vigour on the continent of Europe; menaced at once Antwerp, Madrid, and Naples, and was prevented only by the dilatory conduct of her general from carrying off in triumph thirty ships of the line from the Scheldt, and by the failure of the Spanish authorities to provide supplies, from chasing the imperial usurper from his palace at Madrid.

The Roman empire never had such forces on foot ; they exceeded those wielded by Napoleon in the zenith of his power. To say that the latter enterprises, in the end, miscarried and terminated in disappointment, is no real reproach to the national character. To command success is not always in the power of nations, any more than of individuals. Skill in war, as in pacific enterprise, is not to be attained except by experience. The best security for ultimate triumph is to be found in the spirit which can conceive, and the courage which can deserve it ; and the nation which, after such a contest, could make such exertions, if not in possession of the honours, was at least on the path to the fruits of victory.

Thirty years have now elapsed since this astonishing display of strength in the British empire took place ; and it is interesting to observe what, during that period, has been the change upon the national force and the means of asserting the independence of the country, if again called in question by foreign aggression. The intervening period has been one, it is well known, either of unprecedented triumphs or of unbroken tranquillity. Five years of successful combats brought the war to a glorious issue ; five-and-twenty years of subsequent uninterrupted peace have increased in an extraordinary degree the wealth, population, and resources of the empire. The numbers of the people during that time have increased nearly a half ; the exports and imports have more than doubled ; the tonnage of the commercial navy has risen a half ; and agriculture, following the wants of the increased population of the empire, has advanced in a similar proportion. The warlike establishments of other states have undergone little or no diminution. France has nearly four hundred thousand men in arms ; Russia six hundred thousand, besides forty ships of the line constantly in commission, and ready for service. What, then, with such resources, and exposed to such dangers, is the establishment which Great Britain now maintains, when on the verge of a war in both hemispheres ?

Her army of three hundred thousand regular soldiers and militia has sunk down to ninety-six thousand men ; her fleet of two hundred and forty ships of the line has

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

73.
Comparison
with what it
was at the
outset of the
war and has
since become.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

74.

Extraordinary decline in the warlike forces of England since the peace.

dwindled away to twenty in commission, fifty-eight in ordinary, and twelve building—in all, ninety; her Indian army, which in 1826 numbered two hundred and ninety thousand, has declined to one hundred and eighty thousand combatants, while the population and extent of her Asiatic possessions are hourly on the increase; her regular and local militia have entirely disappeared.* All this has taken place, too, at a time when the wants and necessities of the empire in every quarter of the globe have rapidly augmented, and the resources of the state to maintain an adequate establishment are at least double what they were thirty years

* Tables exhibiting the resources, and military and naval establishments, of the British empire in 1792, 1809, and 1838 :—

I. RESOURCES.

	Population of Great Britain and Ireland.	Exports. Official value.	Imports. Official value.	Tonnage. Great Britain and Ireland.	Revenue.
1792	12,680,000	L. 24,904,850	L. 19,359,358	1,540,145	L. 19,358,814
1809	17,500,000	46,322,632	31,750,557	2,368,468	63,719,400
1838	26,450,000	106,170,549	61,368,320	2,785,387	47,333,000

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*; MARSHALL'S *Tables*; PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*; *Finance Accounts for 1838*, printed 27th March 1839.

II. MILITARY FORCES, AND COLONIAL POPULATION TO DEFEND.

	Regulars.	Militia or Fencibles.	Volunteers or Local Militia.	Colonial Population to defend.	Colonial Army.	Total.
1792	46,562	16,190	None	47,000,000	88,429	151,101
1809	210,000	84,000	320,000	73,000,000	185,504	799,504
1838	96,000	None	None	101,124,000	185,339	281,339

—MARTIN'S *Hist. Col.* i. 314 and 318, &c.; PORTER, ii. 221; *Ann. Reg.* 1792, 147; M'CULLOCH'S *Statistical Account of Great Britain*, ii. 438.

III. NAVAL FORCES.

	LINER.					FRIGATES.			Smaller vessels in all.	Total.		Grand Total.
	In Commis.		Ordinary.			In Com.	Ordr.	Build.	Sloops, Brigs, Etc.	Line.	Frigs.	
	Line.	Guard Ships.	Line.	Guard Ships.	Build-ing.							
1792	26	3	87	25	12	53	57	6	149	153	109	411
1809	113	28	14	40	47	140	25	25	634	242	185	1061
1838	21	None	58	None	12	9	74	10	190	90	93	373

—JAMES'S *Naval History*, i. 404—Table 1; iv. 404—Table 1; BARROW'S *Life of Anson*, App. p. 424.

† This was the establishment of 1792 as measured by the Return of January 1, 1793. The war did not begin till the 8th February 1793, and the execution of Louis, which brought it on, took place on the 21st January 1793; so that this was the peace establishment.

ago.* Nay, to such a length has the public mind become deluded, that it was lately seriously stated by an intelligent and upright Lord of the Admiralty, in his place in parliament, that "it could not be said that Great Britain was defenceless, for that she had *three ships of the line and three guard-ships ready to protect the shores of England*:" being just one-third of the force which Denmark possessed to protect the island of Zealand, when her fleets and arsenals were taken by Great Britain in 1807. There is not, perhaps, to be found so remarkable an instance of the decay of national strength, consequent upon prosperity, in the whole history of the world.¹

"In the youth of a state," says Bacon, "arms do flourish; in the middle age of a state, learning; and then both of them together for a time: in the declining age of a state, *mechanical arts and merchandise*."² "If a monarchy," says Napoleon, "were made of granite, it would soon be reduced to powder by the political economists."³ Are, then, the prognostics of these great men now about to be fulfilled? and is the British empire, the foundations of which were laid by her Edwards and Henries, and the maturity crowned by the genius of Shakspeare and Newton, the conquests of Nelson, and the triumphs of Wellington, to terminate at last in the selfishness of pleasure, or the timid spirit of mercantile opulence? Are the glories of the British name, the wonders of the British empire, to be overwhelmed in the growth of manufacturing wealth, and the short-sighted passion for commercial aggrandisement? Without pretending to decide on these important questions, the solution of which as yet lies buried in the womb of fate, it may safely be affirmed that the topic now alluded to affords deep subject for consideration, both for the British patriot at this time, and the philosophic observer in every future age of mankind. The moralist, who observes how rapidly in private life excessive prosperity saps the foundation of individual virtue, will perhaps be inclined to fear that a similar cause of corruption has, at the period of its greatest exaltation,

CHAP.
LXII.
1809.

¹ See Sir C. Adam's Speech, March 8, 1839.

² 75. Probable effects of this change on the future fortunes of England.

³ Bacon's Works, ii. 393.

⁴ Las Cases, ii. 256.

* This was written in 1839, and applied to the state of the national defences as they then existed.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

78.
The main
cause of it is
to be found
in the demo-
cratic passion
for economy.

blasted the strength of the British empire. The historian, who surveys the indelible traces which human affairs every where exhibit of the seeds of mortality, will probably be led to fear that the days of British greatness are numbered, and that, with the growth of the selfish passions springing out of long-continued and unbroken good fortune, the virtue to deserve, the spirit to defend it, is gradually wearing out of the realm.

But when the days of party strife have passed away, and the events of this time have been transferred into the records of history, all will probably concur in thinking that the immediate cause of this extraordinary decline is to be found in the long-continued and undue preponderance, since the peace, of the popular element of the constitution, and the extraordinary duration and violence of that passion for economical reduction which always springs from the ascendancy, for any considerable time, in the national councils, of the great body of mankind. It is not surprising that such limited views should be entertained by the popular party in Great Britain, when all the eloquence of Demosthenes failed in inducing the most spiritual democracy of antiquity to take any steps to ward off the imminent dangers arising from the ambition of Philip ; and all the wisdom of Washington was unable to communicate to the greatest republic of modern times sufficient strength to prevent its capital being taken, and its arsenals pillaged, by a British division not three thousand five hundred strong. And, without joining in the outcry now directed against either of the administrations which have recently ruled the state, on account of a prostration of the national defences, of which it is easier to see the dangers than to provide the remedy, and in which all parties—save the few far-seeing patriots who had courage to resist the general delusion, and steadily opposed, amidst general obloquy, the excessive and disastrous reductions which were so loudly applauded—will probably be found to be nearly equally implicated, it is the duty of the historian to point out this memorable decline for the constant observation of future ages. Posterity will perhaps deduce from it the inference that present popularity is seldom the reward of real wisdom ; that measures calculated for the benefit of

future ages are hardly ever agreeable to the present ; that the institutions which compel the rulers of the state to bend to the temporary inclinations of the people, in opposition to their ultimate interests, bear in themselves the seeds of mortality ; and were the unobserved but certain cause of the destruction of the greatest power which had existed in the world since the fall of the Roman Empire.

CHAP.
LXII.

1809.

CHAPTER LXIII.

CAMPAIGN OF TORRES VEDRAS.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1809.

I.
Greatness of
Napoleon's
situation
after the
battle of
Wagram.

THE result of the campaign of Wagram had elevated Napoleon to the highest point of greatness, in so far as it could be conferred by present strength and grandeur. Resistance seemed impossible against a power which had vanquished successively the armies of Prussia, Russia, and Austria; contest hopeless with a state which had emerged victorious from eighteen years of warfare. The conflict in the Peninsula, it was true, still lingered on; but disaster had every where attended the Spanish arms, and it only seemed to await the choice of the Emperor when the moment was to arrive that was to see their efforts finally subdued, and the French eagles planted in triumph on the towers of Lisbon. If the maritime war yet continued, it was only because England, with now seemingly unavailing obstinacy, maintained a hopeless contest; and, if she was still the mistress of the waves, that sterile supremacy had been attained by the sacrifice of all the objects for which the dominion of the earth had ever been coveted. More truly than in the time of the Roman Emperors, the inhabitants of Albion were now severed from the civilised nations of the world, and the celebrated line of the poet—

“*Penitus divisos orbe Britannos*” *

seemed, after the revolution of seventeen hundred years, again to present a faithful description of the situation of the British isles.

What, then, was wanting to a sovereign surrounded with such magnificence; to a chief wielding such awful

* “The Britons entirely divided from the globe.”

power? Historic descent, and ancestral glory: and for this one defect, even all the achievements of Napoleon afforded no adequate compensation. In vain the orators of the empire dwelt with deserved emphasis on his marvellous exploits; in vain they pointed to Europe subdued by his arms, the world entranced by his glory. The present alone does not fascinate mankind, the splendour of existing greatness could not obliterate the recollection of departed virtue. Faintly at first, but still perceptibly, the grandeur of ancient days glimmered through the blaze of modern renown. As the whirl of the Revolution subsided, the exploits of the monarchy returned again to the recollection; the rapid fall of almost all dynasties recorded in history founded on individual greatness, recurred in painful clearness even to superficial observation; and in the next generation the claims to the throne, even of the heir of Napoleon's glory, might be overbalanced by those of an infant who had succeeded to the majestic inheritance of fourteen hundred years. The Emperor was too clear-sighted not to perceive those truths; the policy of his imperial government was calculated to revive the sway of those natural feelings in the breasts of the people. But it was difficult to make them stop at the desired point; and the danger was obvious, that the feeling of awe and veneration with which he endeavoured to inspire them towards the throne, might insensibly, in the next age, revive the ancient feelings and attachments of the monarchy.

The necessity of having descendants to perpetuate his dynasty was apparent, and for this object he was prepared to sacrifice the dearest attachment of his existence. But he required heirs who might unite the lustre of former descent with the brightness of recent achievements, and present on the throne an enduring example of that fusion of ancient grandeur with modern interests, which it was the object of all the institutions of the empire to effect. He succeeded in his wish: he exhibited to the astonished world the spectacle of a soldier of fortune from Corsica, winning at the sword's point a daughter of the Cæsars; the birth of a son seemed to realise all his hopes, and blend the imperial blood with the exploits of a greater than Charlemagne. And yet,

CHAP.
LXIII.

1809.

2.

The want
which he felt
of heirs and
historic
descent.

3.

Difficulties in
the way of
attaining
these.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1809.

such is the connexion, often indissoluble even in this world, between injustice and retribution, and such the mysterious manner in which Providence renders the actions of men the unconscious instruments of its will, that from this apparently auspicious event may be dated the commencement of his downfall. The birth of the King of Rome was coeval with the retreat of Massena from before the lines of Torres Vedras, the first occasion on which the imperial arms had permanently recoiled in continental warfare; and in the jealousy excited in the Russian cabinet by the preference given to the Austrian alliance, is to be found the ultimate source of his ruin. "That marriage," said Napoleon, "was the cause of my destruction; in contracting it I placed my foot on an abyss covered over with flowers."¹*

¹ Las Cases, ii. 108; and iii. 131.

4.
Different alliances which were the object of his choice.

The Emperor had long meditated the divorce of the Empress, and his marriage with a princess who might afford him the hopes of a family. Not that he felt the unconcern so common with sovereigns in making this momentous separation. His union with Josephine had not been founded on reasons of state, or contracted with a view to political aggrandisement. It had been formed in early youth, based on romantic attachment; it was interwoven with all his fortunes, and associated with his most interesting recollections: and though impetuous in his desires, and by no means insensible on many occasions to the attractions of other women, his homage to them had been the momentary impulse of desire, without ever eradicating from his heart its genuine affection for the first object of his attachment. But all these feelings were subordinate with Napoleon to considerations of public necessity or reasons of state policy; and though he suffered severely from the prospect of the separation, the anguish which he experienced was never permitted for an instant to make him swerve from the resolution he had adopted. The grandeur of his fortune, and the apparent

* "Πολλῶν ταμίης Ζεὺς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
Πολλὰ δ' αἰσπας κρείνεται θεοί·
Καὶ τὰ δεκθὲντ' οὐκ ἐπιλίσθη,
Τῶν δ' ἀδοκίτων πόρον εὖρε θεός.
Ταῖνδ' ἐπίβη τόδε πρῶγμα."

EURIPIDES, *Medea*, 1415-19

solidity of his throne, gave him the choice of all the princesses of continental Europe; and the affair was debated in the council of state as a mere matter of public expedience, without the slightest regard to private inclination, and still less to oppressed virtue.* For a moment an alliance with a native of France was the subject of consideration, but it was soon laid aside for very obvious reasons; a princess of Saxony was also proposed, but this idea was rather recommended by the absence of any objections against, than the weight of any reason for its adoption. At length it was resolved to make advances to the courts both of St Petersburg and Vienna; and, without committing the Emperor positively to either, to be determined by the march of events, and the manner in which the proposals were received, from which of the two imperial houses a partner for the throne of Napoleon was to be selected.¹

CHAP.
LXIII.

1809.

¹ Thib. vii.
99, 101.
Montg. vii. 4.
Bign. ix. 63,
66.

It was at Fontainebleau, in November 1809, after the return of the Emperor from the battle of Wagram, that the heart-rending communication of this resolution was first made to the Empress. She had hastened to meet Napoleon after his return from that eventful campaign; but, though received at first with kindness, she was not long of perceiving, from the restraint and embarrassment of his manner, and the separation studiously maintained between them, that the stroke which she had so long dreaded was about to fall upon her. After fifteen days of painful suspense and anxiety, the fatal resolution was communicated to her, on the 30th of November, by the Emperor himself. They dined together as usual, but neither spoke a word during the repast; their eyes were averted as soon as they met; but the countenance of both revealed the mortal anguish of their minds. When it was over, he dismissed the attendants, and, approaching

5.
Disclosure of
the resolution
for a divorce
to Josephine
at Fontaine-
bleau.
Nov. 30.

* Napoleon's ideas on this subject are the same as those so finely expressed by Corneille:—

“ Il repousse l'amour comme un lâche attentat
Des qu'il veut prevaloir sur la raison d'état;
Et son cœur, audessus de ces basses amorces,
Laisse à cette raison toujours toutes ses forces.
Quand l'amour avec elle a de quoi s'accorder,
Tout est beau, tout succède, on n'a qu'à demander;
Mais pour pen, qu'elle en soit, on doit être alarmée,
Son feu qu'elle dedit doit tourner en fumée.”

Sophonisbe, Act iv. scene 3.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1809.

the Empress with a trembling step, took her hand and laid it upon his heart :—"Josephine," said he, "my good Josephine, you know how I have loved you ; it is to you, to you alone, that I owe the few moments of happiness I have known in the world : Josephine, my destiny is more powerful than my will ; my dearest affections must yield to the interests of France."—"Say no more," cried the Empress ; "I expected this ; I understand, and feel for you ; but the stroke is not the less mortal." With these words she uttered piercing shrieks, and fell down in a swoon. Dr Corvisart was at hand to render assistance, and she was restored to a sense of her wretchedness in her own apartment. The Emperor came to see her in the evening ; but she could hardly bear the emotion occasioned by his appearance. How memorable a proof of the equality with which happiness is bestowed on all classes of men, that Napoleon, at the summit of earthly grandeur, and when sated with every human felicity, confessed that the only moments of happiness he had known in life, had been derived from those affections which were common to him with all mankind, and was driven to a sacrifice of them which would not have been required from the meanest of his subjects.¹

¹ Bourr. viii.
342, 344.
Mem. de
Joseph. i.
202, 209.

6.
Speech of the
Emperor on
the occasion
of the
divorce.

Dec. 15.

A painful duty was now imposed on all those concerned in this exalted drama, that of assigning their motives, and playing their parts in its last stages, before the great audience of the world. And certainly, if on such occasions the speeches are generally composed for the actors, there never was one on which nobler sentiments were delivered, though perhaps none on which they were less descriptive of the real feelings of the parties. On the 15th of December, all the kings, princes, and princesses, members of the imperial family, with the great officers of the empire, being assembled in the Tuileries, the Emperor thus addressed them :—"The political interests of my monarchy, the wishes of my people, which have constantly guided my actions, require that I should leave behind me, to heirs of my love for my people, the throne on which Providence has placed me. For many years I have lost all hopes of having children by my beloved spouse the Empress Josephine ; this it is which induces me to sacrifice the sweetest affections of my

heart, to consider only the good of my subjects, and desire the dissolution of our marriage. Arrived at the age of forty years, I may indulge a reasonable hope of living long enough to rear, in the spirit of my own thoughts and disposition, the children with which it may please Providence to bless me. God knows what such a determination has cost my heart! but there is no sacrifice which is above my courage, when it is proved to be for the interests of France. Far from having any cause of complaint, I have nothing to say but in praise of the attachment and tenderness of my beloved wife. She has embellished fifteen years of my life; the remembrance of them will be for ever engraven on my heart. She was crowned by my hand; she shall retain always the rank and title of empress: but above all, let her never doubt my feelings, or regard me save as her best and dearest friend.”¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1809.

¹ Monit. Feb.
6, 1810. Bign.
ix. 58, 59.

Josephine replied, with a faltering voice and tears in her eyes, but in words worthy of the grandeur of the occasion. “I respond to all the sentiments of the Emperor in consenting to the dissolution of a marriage which henceforth is an obstacle to the happiness of France, by depriving it of the blessing of being one day governed by the descendants of that great man, evidently raised up by Providence to efface the evils of a terrible revolution, and restore the altar, the throne, and social order. But his marriage will in no respect change the sentiments of my heart; the Emperor will ever find me his best friend. I know what this act, commanded by policy and exalted interests, has cost his heart: but we both glory in the sacrifices which we make to the good of our country: I feel elevated by giving the greatest proof of attachment and devotion that was ever given upon earth.” “When my mother,” said Eugene Beauharnais, “was crowned before the nation, by the hands of her august husband, she contracted the obligation to sacrifice her affections to the interests of France. She has discharged with courage and dignity that first of duties. Her heart has been often torn by beholding the soul of a man accustomed to master fortune, and to advance with a firm step in the prosecution of his great designs, exhausted by painful conflicts. The tears which this resolution has

7.
Josephine's
dignified
answer.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1809:

Dec. 15.

¹ Goldsmith's
Recueil, iv.
746, 747.
Bign. ix. 53,
61. Mém.
de Josephine,
ii. 205, 208.

cost the Emperor, suffice for my mother's glory. In the situation where she will be placed, she will not be a stranger to his wishes or his sentiments: and it will be with a satisfaction mingled with pride, that she will witness the felicity which her sacrifices have purchased for her country." But though they used this language in public, the members of the imperial family were far from feeling the same equanimity in private. They were all in the deepest affliction: Josephine was almost constantly in tears; in vain she appealed to the Emperor, to the Pope, for protection; and so violent and long-continued was her grief, that for six months afterwards her eyesight was seriously impaired. The subsequent arrangements were rapidly completed; and, on the same day, the marriage of the Emperor and Empress was dissolved by an act of the senate; the jointure of the latter being fixed at two millions of francs, or £80,000 a-year, and Malmaison appointed as her place of residence.¹

8.
Proposals
made to the
Emperor
Alexander for
an alliance
with his
sister.

Nov. 24.

Though the divorce, however, was thus accomplished yet it was by no means as yet determined, whether the honour of furnishing a successor to the imperial throne should belong to the imperial family of Russia or Austria. Napoleon, without deciding in favour of either the one or the other, sounded in secret the disposition of both courts. His views had, in the first instance, been directed towards the Russian alliance; and, on the 24th November, a week before he had even communicated his designs to Josephine, a letter in cipher had been despatched to Caulaincourt, the French ambassador at St Petersburg, enjoining him to open the project of a marriage with his sister to the Emperor Alexander in person; requiring him, at the same time, to make inquiries when the young Grand-duchess might become a mother, as in the existing state of affairs six months might make a material difference. Alexander replied to the French ambassador that the proposal was extremely agreeable to himself personally, and coincided entirely with his political views; but that an imperial ukase, as well as the last will of his father, had left his sisters entirely at the disposal of his mother. "Her ideas," added he, "are not always in unison with my wishes, nor with policy, nor even reason."² When I spoke to the Emperor at Erfurth, of the anxious desire

Dec. 28.

² Bign. ix.
66. Thib.
viii. 101.

which all his friends had to see his dynasty established by heirs, he answered only vaguely ; I thought that he did not enter into my ideas, and did nothing in consequence. Having not prepared the way, I cannot in consequence now answer you. If the affair depended on me, you should have my word before leaving this cabinet."

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

At a subsequent interview, a few days after, the Emperor expressed his regret that Napoleon had not sooner expressed his intentions, and declared in favour of his elder sister, (since Duchess of Oldenburg,) who, both from talent, character, and age, would have been much more suitable than her younger sister, Anne Paulowna, who was now in question. In regard to her, he declared his intention of sounding his mother, without actually compromising the French Emperor. But these delays were little suitable to the ardent temper of Napoleon. He demanded, as soon as he was informed of these conversations, a categorical answer in the space of ten days. But this period was consumed in fruitless discussions with the Dowager Empress, who alleged the extreme youth of the Grand-duchess, who was only sixteen, the difference of their religion, and other reasons still more insignificant, such as, whether Napoleon was qualified to become a father. "A princess of Russia," said she, "is not to be wooed and won in a few days: two years hence it will be time enough to terminate such an affair." She concluded by demanding a Russian chapel and priests in the Tuileries, and a delay of a few months to improve the age and overcome the scruples or timidity of the young princess.¹

9.
Difficulties
with which
they were
met at the
court of St
Petersburg.
Jan. 1, 1810.

Jan 10.

¹ Bign. ix.
66, 72. Thib.
viii. 101, 104.

"To adjourn is to refuse," said Napoleon: "besides, I do not choose to have foreign priests in my palace, between my wife and myself." He instantly took his determination. Foreseeing that a refusal was likely to ensue, he resolved to prevent such a mortification by himself taking the initiative in breaking off the Russian negotiation. Before the expiry of the ten days even, fixed by Caulaincourt for the ultimatum of Russia, secret advances were made by Maret, minister of foreign affairs, to Prince Schwartzberg, the Austrian ambassador at Paris: the proposals were eagerly accepted. As soon as this was known, the questions of a Russian or

10.
Napoleon
proposes to
Marie Louise,
and is
accepted.

Jan. 26

CHAP.
LXIII.

1809.

Feb. 1.

Feb. 6.

Feb. 7.

Feb. 16.

March 11.

¹ Bign. ix.
66, 76. Thib.
viii. 101, 105.

Austrian alliance was publicly mooted and debated in the council of state by the great officers of the empire, and, after a warm discussion, decided in favour of the latter, on a division. Napoleon professed himself determined entirely by the majority; and five days before the answer of Russia arrived, requesting delay, the decision of the cabinet of the Tuileries had been irrevocably taken in favour of the Austrian alliance. So rapidly were the preliminaries adjusted, that the marriage contract was signed at Paris, on the model of, that of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, on the 7th, and at Vienna on the 16th February; and on the 11th March the marriage was celebrated at Vienna with great pomp: Berthier demanding the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise, and the Archduke Charles standing proxy for the Austrian Emperor.¹

11.
Journey of
the Empress
Marie Louise
to Paris.

On the day after the ceremony the new Empress set out from Vienna, and was received at Braunau, the frontier town of Austria, by the Queen of Naples. There she separated from her Austrian attendants, and continued her journey by slow stages, and surrounded with all the pomp of imperial splendour, and all the fatigue of etiquette, to the neighbourhood of Paris. Notwithstanding all the political advantages of the alliance, her departure was the occasion of great regret at Vienna. A large portion of the people openly murmured against the sacrifice of a daughter of Austria to the state necessities of the time; they regarded it as worse than the cession of the Illyrian provinces, more disgraceful than the abandonment of Hofer to the vengeance of the conqueror; and even the continuance of the war appeared preferable to the humiliating conditions by which it was thought peace had been obtained. In France, on the other hand, all the public authorities vied with each other in demonstrations of loyalty and enthusiasm. The choicest flowers awaited her at every stage; crowds of respectful spectators lined the streets of all the towns through which she passed; this great event was regarded as at once the final triumph, and closing the gulf of the Revolution, by winning for its victorious leader the daughter of the first family in Europe, and mingling the lustre of descent with the grandeur of a conqueror's throne.² "She is not

² Thib. viii.
108. Bign. ix.
79, 82. Las
Cases, i. 330.

beautiful," said the Emperor, on a subsequent visit to Josephine, when he saw her miniature, "but she is the daughter of the Cæsars." These sonorous words more than compensated every deficiency ; the sinister presage, arising from the fate of Marie Antoinette, was forgotten, and the most intoxicating anticipations were formed of the consequences of this auspicious union.

According to the programme of the etiquette to be observed on the occasion, the Emperor was to meet the Empress at Compeigne, and immediately return to Paris ; while she proceeded to St Cloud, where she was to remain till the marriage was celebrated. But the ardour of Napoleon broke through these formalities, and saved both parties the tedium of several days' expectation. After the example of Henry IV., when he went to Lyons to meet his bride, Marie de Medicis, on her journey from Italy, he had no sooner received intelligence of her approaching Compeigne, where he then was, than he went to meet her at the next post. As soon as she drove up,

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

12.
Singular
breach of
etiquette
which took
place when
they met.

March 28.

springing out of his carriage, he leaped into that of the Empress, without regard to the dampness of his clothes, which had become wet from a heavy rain that fell at the time, embraced her with more than youthful vehemence, and ordered the postilions to drive at the gallop to the Palace of Compeigne. He had previously inquired of the legal authorities, whether, if a child were to be conceived without the formal marriage being celebrated, it would, if born after its conclusion by proxy, be legitimate ; and being answered in the affirmative, he took this method of cutting short all the fatiguing ceremonies of the occasion. The Empress was not a little surprised, though in secret perhaps flattered, at the unexpected ardour, as well as the youthful appearance of her husband ; and next day, it is affirmed, her attendants hardly knew their former mistress, so much had she improved in ease and affability from the establishment of her rank, and the society of the Emperor. The marriage was celebrated three days afterwards with extraordinary pomp at St Cloud on the 1st April : on the day following the Emperor and Empress made their solemn entrance into Paris, amidst the roar of artillery, the clang of bells, and the acclamations of three hundred thousand spectators. They received the nuptial benediction at

April 1.

April 2.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

¹ *Moniteur*,
March 28,
April 3, 1810.
Thib. viii.
109, 120.
Bign. ix. 79,
86. *Las Cases*,
i. 330, 331.
Bausset, ii.
45, 46. *Cap.*
viii. 352.

the Tuileries. Four queens held the train of Marie Louise : all the splendour of riches and all the brilliancy of arms were exhausted to give magnificence to the occasion. But though the *Moniteur* was filled for several months with congratulations on the event, and all the flowers of rhetoric and all the arts of adulation were exhausted in flattery, the people evinced no real enthusiasm after the spectacles were over ; and in the multitude of gorgeous heralds, plumed pages, and arm-embazoned carriages, which were every where to be seen, the few remaining republicans beheld the extinction of their last dreams of liberty and equality.¹

13.
*Pique of the
Emperor
Alexander
on the occa-
sion.*

The hand of Napoleon, however, was too important an element in the balance of European power to be given away, without its occasioning deep mortification in the minds of those who deemed themselves slighted on the occasion ; and it soon appeared to what incalculable consequences this marriage might ultimately lead. Alexander, though not particularly solicitous about the connexion, was yet piqued in no ordinary degree at the haste with which the Austrian alliance had been concluded, and in an especial manner mortified at the hand of his sister having been in effect discarded, while yet the proposal for it was under consideration at St Petersburg. This feeling was so strong, that it was apparent even through all the congratulations of the imperial court, and all the practised dissimulation of the Emperor. "We are pleased with this event," said Romanzoff, the chancellor of the empire, to Caulaincourt ; "we feel no envy at Austria ; we have no cause of complaint against her ; every thing that secures her tranquillity and that of Europe cannot but be agreeable to us."—"Congratulate the Emperor," said Alexander, "on his choice. He wishes to have children : all France desire it : this alliance is for Austria and France a pledge of peace, and on that account I am enchanted at it. Nevertheless, it is fortunate that the objection of age so soon disposed of the affair. If I had not taken the precaution to speak to the Empress only in my own name, as of an event which by possibility might arise, what effect would now have been produced ? Where should we now have been if I had not scrupulously attended to her rights ? What reproaches might I not

have justly addressed to you? The delays of which you so much complained, were therefore the result of prudence. Have you been equally considerate? Were you not conducting two negotiations at once? How was it possible that the marriage could have been concluded at Paris on the 9th February, almost before the arrival of the messenger from St Petersburg, despatched on the 21st January, after the lapse of the ten days allowed for our ultimatum, and who was the bearer only of a proposal for farther delay, to overcome the scruples of the Empress and Grand-duchess? If the difference of religion had been an insurmountable objection, you should have said so at first. It is beyond measure fortunate that the age of the Grand-duchess could not be got over. In this instance, as when the same subject was talked of at Erfurth, it was your Emperor who spoke first; I only interfered in it as a friend: personally I may have some reason to complain, but I do not do so: I rejoice at whatever is for the good of France."¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

When such was the language of the Emperor, it may be conceived what were the feelings at St Petersburg, and how materially the discontent of the court weakened the French influence, already so hateful to the nobles and the people. These details are not foreign to the dignity of history; they are intimately blended with the greatest events which modern Europe has witnessed. For though governed in his conduct in general only by state policy, and a perfect master of dissimulation, Alexander was scrupulously attentive to his private honour; the coldness between the two courts soon became apparent, and led to the most momentous consequences. For such is the weakness of human nature, alike in its most exalted as its humblest stations, that possibly political considerations might have failed to extricate the cabinet of St Petersburg from the fetters of Tilsit and Erfurth, if they had not been aided by private pique; and Napoleon might have been still on the throne, if to the slavery of Europe, and the wrongs of the Emperor, had not been superadded, in the breast of the Czar, the wounded feelings of the man.²

¹ Bign. ix.
86, 90. Hard.
xi. 77, 78.

14.
Vast importance of this resolution of Napoleon.

² Bign. ix.
86, 90. Hard.
xi. 77, 79.

Few persons in that elevated rank have undergone such varieties of fortune as Josephine, and fewer still have borne so well the ordeal both of prosperity and adversity.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

15.
Character of
Josephine.

Born at first in the middle class of society, she was the wife of a respectable but obscure officer ; the Revolution afterwards threw her into a dungeon, where she was saved from the scaffold only by the fall of Robespierre. The hand of Napoleon made her successively the partner of every rank, from the general's staff to the Emperor's throne ; and the same connexion consigned her, at the very highest point of her elevation, to degradation and seclusion ; the loss of her consequence, separation from her husband, the sacrifice of her affections. Stripped of her influence, cast down from her rank, wounded in her feelings, the divorced Empress found the calamity, felt in any rank, of being childless, the envenomed dart which pierced her to the heart. It was no common character which could pass through such marvellous changes of fortune unmarked by any decided stain, unsullied by any tears of suffering. If, during the confusion of all moral ideas consequent on the first triumph of the Revolution, her reputation did not escape the breath of scandal ; and if the favourite of Barras occasioned, even when the wife of Napoleon, some frightful fits of jealousy in her husband, she maintained an exemplary decorum when seated on the Consular and Imperial throne, and communicated a degree of elegance to the court of the Tuileries which could hardly have been expected, after the confusion of ranks and ruin of the old nobility which had preceded her elevation.

16.
Her weak-
nesses.

Passionately fond of dress, and often blamably extravagant in that particular, she occasioned no small embarrassment to the treasury by her expenditure ; but this weakness was forgiven in the recollection of its necessity to compensate the inequality of their years, in the amiable use which she made of her possessions, the grace of her manner, and the alacrity with which she was ever ready to exert her influence with her husband to plead the cause of suffering, or avert the punishment of innocence. Though little inclined to yield in general to female persuasion, Napoleon both loved and felt the sway of this amiable character ; and often in his sternest fits he was weaned from violent measures by her influence. Her influence over him was evinced in the most conclusive manner, by the ascendant which she maintained after

their separation from each other. The divorce and marriage of Marie Louise produced no estrangement between them : in her retirement at Malmaison she was frequently visited and consulted by the Emperor ; they corresponded to the last moment of her life ; and the fidelity with which she adhered to him in his misfortunes won the esteem of his conquerors, as it must command the respect of all succeeding ages of the world.¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Las Cases,
i. 330. Bour.
passim.

Born in the highest rank, descended from the noblest ancestry, called to the most exalted destinies, the daughter of the Cæsars, the wife of Napoleon, the mother of his son, Marie Louise appeared to unite in her person all the grandeur and felicity of which human nature is susceptible. But her mind had received no lofty impress ; her character was unworthy of the greatness of her fortune. She had the blood of Maria Theresa in her veins, but not her spirit in her soul. Her fair hair, blue eyes, and pleasing expression, bespoke the Gothic race ; and the affability of her demeanour, and sweetness of her manner, at first produced a general prepossession in her favour. But she was adapted to the sunshine of prosperity only ; the wind of adversity blew, and she sank before its breath. Young, amiable, prepossessing, she won the Emperor's affections by the *naïveté* and simplicity of her character ; and he always said that she was innocence with all its sweetness, Josephine grace with all its charms. "All the attractions of art," he said, "were employed by the first Empress with such skill, that they were never perceived ; all the charms of innocence displayed by the second with such simplicity, that their existence was never suspected." Both were benevolent, kind-hearted, affectionate ; both, to the last hour of his life, retained the warm regard of the Emperor ; and both possessed qualities worthy of his affection.²

17.
Character of
Marie Louise.

² Las Cases,
i. 330 ; ii. 112.

If her husband had lived and died on the imperial throne, few Empresses would have left a more blameless reputation than Marie Louise. But she was unequal to the trials of the latter years of his life. If her dubious situation, the daughter of one Emperor, the wife of another, both leaders in the strife, might plead her excuse for not taking any decided part in favour of the national independence on the invasion of France, the misfortunes

18.
Her faults.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

of her husband and son had claims upon her fidelity which should never have been overlooked. The wife of the Emperor should never have permitted him to go into exile alone ; the mother of the King of Rome should never have forgotten to what destinies her son had been born. What an object would she, after such sacrifices, returning from St Helena after Napoleon's death, have formed in history ! Force may have prevented her from discharging that sacred duty ; but force did not compel her to appear at the Congress of Verona, leaning on the arm of Wellington, nor oblige the widow of Napoleon to sink at last into the degraded wife of her own chamberlain.

19.
Journey of
the Emperor
and Empress
to Belgium.

Shortly after his marriage, the Emperor set out with his young bride for the Low Countries. They proceeded by St Quentin, Cambray, and Valenciennes, to Brussels, every where received with adulatory addresses, passing under triumphal arches, and entering cities amidst the roar of artillery. But other cares than the civil government of his dominions, other designs than the amusement of the young Empress, occupied the mind of the Emperor. The war with England still continued ; maritime preparations were necessary for its subjugation ; Antwerp was the centre of these preparations. It was from the Scheldt that the mortal stroke was to be dealt out. The first care of the Emperor, therefore, was to visit the citadel, fortifications, and vast naval preparations at this important point. An eighty-gun ship was launched in his presence, and one of the new forts erecting on the left bank of the river, beyond the Tête-de-Flandre, was called by the name of Marie Louise, which it still bears. He had every reason to be satisfied with the works in progress. Thirty ships of the line, nearly as great a fleet as that which was destroyed at Trafalgar, were ready for sea in the docks. From Antwerp the Emperor descended the Scheldt to Flushing and Middleburg, where he gave directions for extensive works and fortifications, that were to do more than repair the devastations which had been committed by the English in the island of Walcheren. They afterwards returned by Ghent, Lisle, Calais, Boulogne, and Havre de Grace, to Paris, which they reached on the 1st of June. Napoleon there assisted in the interment of the body of Marshal Lannes at the Chapel of the

Invalids at Paris. The direction of this journey, undertaken so shortly after his marriage, revealed the secret designs of the Emperor. Naval preparations, the conquest of England, were uppermost in his thoughts ; and if any additional arguments were necessary to vindicate the destination given to the Walcheren expedition, it would be found in the direction he gave to this journey.¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Thib. viii.
124, 129.

A deplorable event occurred shortly after, which recalled the recollection of the lamentable accident that had occurred on the occasion of the marriage of Marie Antoinette, and was regarded of sinister augury for the marriage of the young Empress. Prince Schwartzberg, the Austrian ambassador at Paris, gave a magnificent ball on the 6th of July, at which the Emperor and Empress and the whole court were assembled. From the great number of guests expected on the occasion, it was deemed necessary to enlarge the accommodations of his hotel. The large dancing-room was fitted up in the most sumptuous manner, in a temporary building behind, and the festoons and drapery, in particular, excited universal admiration. By accident, one of the gauze curtains took fire from a lamp in its vicinity, and the flames rapidly spread over the whole roof and interior of the structure. The coolness of Napoleon was as conspicuous here as in the field of battle ; he immediately sought out the Empress, took her quietly by the arm, and led her out of danger. Many persons, however, were scorched by the flames, or wounded by the falling of the beams, and some of them died afterwards of these injuries. But all lesser considerations were forgotten in the dreadful fate of the Princess Pauline of Schwartzberg, the sister-in-law of the ambassador. This amiable person had been one of the last of the company who escaped from the burning room, with her daughter in her hand. Both had got out in safety ; but in the confusion, the child was separated from her mother, and the latter, conceiving that she had been left behind in the scene of danger, rushed, with generous devotion, back again into the burning saloon, and was crushed by the falling of the beams. So fierce were the flames, that the place where the unfortunate princess had perished could only be discovered by a gold ornament she had worn on her arm,

20.
Dreadful catastrophe at
Prince
Schwartzberg's hall.

July 6.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

¹ Bign. xix.
159. Thib.
viii. 128, 129.

which resisted the conflagration. This frightful incident excited a deep sensation in Paris, chiefly from its being regarded as a prognostic connected with the marriage of the Empress. But history must assign it a higher character, and commemorate the fate of the Princess Schwartzemberg as one of the noblest instances of maternal heroism recorded in the annals of the world.¹

21.
Singular in-
trigue and
fall of
Fouché.

This period was rendered remarkable by the fall of one of the ministers of Napoleon, who had hitherto exercised the most unbounded influence in the internal concerns of the empire. Fouché, whose talents for intrigue, and thorough acquaintance with the details both of Jacobin conspiracy and police administration, had hitherto rendered him a necessary part of the imperial administration, fell into disgrace. The immediate cause of his overthrow was the improper use and undue extension which he gave to a secret proposition at this time made to the British government, by Napoleon, for a general peace. The Dutch ambassador was the agent employed in this mysterious communication, and the proposals of Napoleon went to surrender to the English almost the entire government of the seas, provided that that power would abandon to him the uncontrolled sovereignty of the continent of Europe. In his secret conferences with the French agent on this subject, the person employed by Marquis Wellesley insisted strongly on the prosperous condition of the British empire, and its ability to withstand a long period of future warfare from the resources which the monopoly of the trade of the world had thrown into its hands. These views singularly interested Napoleon, who had more than one agent employed in the transaction. This negotiation was discovered by Fouché, and either from an excusable desire to get to the bottom of the views of the British cabinet on the subject, or from an insatiable passion for intrigue, which could not allow any such transaction to go on without assuming its direction, he took it upon himself, without the knowledge or authority of the Emperor, to open a secret negotiation indirectly with Marquis Wellesley. The agent employed in these mysterious communications was M. Ouvrard, a man of considerable skill in intrigue,² and whose vast monetary transactions had already pro-

² Fouché, i.
417, 418.
Bign. ix. 136.
Thib. viii.
130, 134.

May 1810.

duced such important effects in the early part of Napoleon's reign.*

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

22.

The first negotiation is discovered.

Ouvrard repaired to Amsterdam, where he entered into communication with an Irishman of the name of Fagan, in London. Labouchère, an agent of the King of Holland, who had formerly been on a similar mission to the British government, was also employed in the transaction, and he communicated it to his sovereign Louis, by whom it was revealed to Napoleon at Antwerp. Ouvrard was in consequence arrested, immediately after Napoleon's return to Paris, and closely interrogated by the Emperor. It was proved from this examination, and from the documents found in his possession, that the basis of Fouché's propositions were, that the government of the continent of Europe should be surrendered to Napoleon, and that of all the transmarine states and the seas to England, with the exception of South America, which was to be made over to the French Emperor. In order to accomplish this double spoliation, a French army of forty thousand men was to be embarked on board an English fleet, and charged with the reduction of North America to the government of Great Britain, and of South America to that of France. Extravagant as these propositions may appear, it is proved by a holograph note of Napoleon himself, that they had been made by the minister of police to the English government. "What was M. Ouvrard commissioned to do in England?" said Napoleon to Fouché, when examined before the council. "To ascertain," replied he, "the disposition of the new minister for foreign affairs in Great Britain, according to the views which I have had the honour of submitting to your majesty." "Thus then," replied Napoleon, "you take upon yourself to make peace or war without my knowledge. Duke of Otranto, your head shall fall upon the scaffold."¹

¹ Note of Nap. 8th July 1810 Mem. de Fouché, i. 417, 418. Thib. viii. 130, 135.

Upon consideration, however, Napoleon was inclined to adopt less rigorous measures. He was fearful of exhibiting to the world any instance of treachery in the imperial government, and perhaps not altogether at ease concerning the revelations which Fouché, if driven to extremities, might make regarding his own administra-

23.

Fouché's disgrace is modified, and he is made governor of Rome.

* *Ante*, Chap. xlii. § 11.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

tion. He limited the punishment of the fallen minister, therefore, to deprivation of his office of minister of police, which was immediately bestowed on Savary, Duke of Rovigo.* To break his fall, Fouché was, in the first instance, declared governor of Rome, and he set out from Paris shortly after for that destination. But the recall of his appointment overtook him before he arrived at the Eternal City: he stopped short at Leghorn, and, in despair, took his place in a vessel with a view to seek for refuge in America. The sufferings he had undergone, however, from sea-sickness, in the outset of his passage, ultimately deterred him from carrying that intention into effect. He remained in Tuscany, determined to take his chance of Napoleon's vengeance, rather than incur the certain misery of a voyage across the Atlantic. He obtained, soon after, permission to return to Aix, in Provence, where he lived for some time in retirement. But at length the necessities of his situation obliged Napoleon again to have recourse to his assistance; and he took a prominent part in the subsequent course of events which ultimately brought about the overthrow of the empire.¹

¹ Mem. de Fouché, i. 417, 418; ii. 13, 38. Thib. viii. 130, 138. Bign. ix. 136, 142.

24.
Rupture with Louis Buonaparte.

A still more important consequence resulted from the journey of Napoleon to the Low Countries, in the resignation of Louis, and the annexation of Holland and the Hanse Towns to the French empire. Napoleon had long been dissatisfied with his brother's government of the Dutch provinces; for that sovereign, sensible that his subjects' existence depended on their commerce, had done all in his power to soften the hardships of their situation, and had not enforced the imperial decree against English trade with the rigour which the impatient disposition of the Emperor deemed necessary. The displeasure arising from this cause was much increased by the immense importations of English merchandise and colonial produce

* The Emperor said to Savary, on appointing him minister of police, "I have put you in Fouché's place, because I have found I could no longer rely upon him. He was taking precautions against me when I had no designs against him, and attempting to establish consideration for himself at my expense. He was constantly endeavouring to divine my intentions, in order to appear to lead me; and as I have become reserved towards him, he became the dupe of intrigues, and was often getting into scrapes." You will soon see that it was in that spirit that he undertook, without my knowledge, to make peace between France and England.—SAVARY, iv. 315.

which took place into the north of Germany and the States of Holland, in consequence of the absence of the French guards from the coast during the campaign of Wagram and the Walcheren expedition; an importation so enormous, that, chiefly owing to its influence, the British exports, which in 1808 had been only £30,387,990, were raised in the succeeding year to £46,292,632.¹ Determined to put an end to such a state of matters, which he deemed entirely subversive of his continental policy, so far at least as Holland was concerned, as well as with a view to prepare the minds of the Dutch for the general incorporation which he meditated, Napoleon compelled Louis, by a treaty concluded in the middle of March, to cede to France his whole territories on the left bank of the Rhine, including the isles of Walcheren, South Beveland, Cadsand, and the adjacent territory on the continent to the left of that river, which was formed into a department under the name of that of the Mouth of the Scheldt. At the same time, it was intimated to the King of Holland that he must relinquish all intercourse, direct or indirect, with England, and consent to his coasts being entirely guarded by French soldiers.²

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Marshall's
Stat. Tab.
48; and Por-
ter, ii. 98.

March 16.

² Treaty with
Louis, Mart.
v. 327. Sup.
Bign. ix. 182,
133. Thib.
viii. 139.

This cession, however, was but the prelude to more important demands. During the Emperor's visit to Antwerp, he became more than ever convinced of the expedience of incorporating the whole of Holland with the French empire; and many letters, in the most haughty style, were written by him to the unfortunate King of Holland in the course of his journey back to Paris, evidently intended to make him in despair resign the crown. The last, from Lille, on the 16th May, concluded with these words:—"It is high time that I should know definitively whether you are determined to occasion the ruin of Holland: write no more to me in your accustomed phrases; for three years you have been constantly repeating them, and every successive day has proved their falsehood. This is the last letter in my life I shall ever write to you." Matters soon after came to a crisis: Oudinot, with a French army twenty thousand strong, crossed the frontier, and rapidly advanced towards Amsterdam. Louis, who had a thorough reliance on the affection of his Dutch subjects, who knew what mortifications he had undergone

25.
Incorporation of Hol-
land with the
French em-
pire.

May 16.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

July 1.

July 9.

1 Hard. xi.
86, 90. Mart.
Sup. v. 338.
Thib. viii.
137, 141.
Bign. iv. 189,
196.

26.
Napoleon's
public and
private
motives for
this step.

Aug. 1.

Dec. 13.

on their account, at first thought seriously of resistance; but upon the assurance of his generals that it was hopeless, he abandoned the attempt. It was next proposed to imitate the conduct of the Prince-Royal of Portugal, and fly to Batavia, as he had done to Brazil. But this project was relinquished as impracticable; and at length the unhappy monarch came to the determination of resigning in favour of his son, the Prince-Royal, Napoleon Louis. Having executed this deed, he set out in the night from Haarlem for Toplitz in Bohemia, having first taken the precaution to order that the resignation should not be published till he had quitted the kingdom. The publication of this unexpected resolution excited universal consternation in Holland; but every one foresaw what soon after proved the denouement of the tragedy. On the 9th July, a decree appeared, incorporating the whole kingdom of Holland with the French empire.¹

"Obliged," as the report preceding the decree set forth, "to make common cause with France, Holland bore the charges of such an association without experiencing any of its advantages. Its debt, fixed on so inconsiderable a territory, was above a fourth of that of the whole empire. Its taxes were triple what they were in France. In such a state of matters, the interest of Holland loudly called for its annexation to the Empire: nor was the interest of France less obvious in the transaction. To leave in foreign hands the mouths of the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, would be to render the French commerce and manufactures tributary to the possessor of those estuaries. The present incorporation, on the other hand, completes the empire of Napoleon, and his system of war, policy, and commerce. It is a step necessary to the restoration of his marine; in fine, it is the most decisive stroke which he could deliver against England." Louis protested against the measure as destructive alike of the interests of Holland and the rights of his son; and with much dignity refused the provision of two millions of francs a-year (£80,000) fixed on him by a supplemental decree of the Senate in December following. Prince Louis, his son, repaired to Paris, where he was kindly received by the Emperor, who had been much annoyed by the scandal which this family rupture would occasion in the world. His words, at his first interview

with his disrowned nephew, were as characteristic of his private feelings, as his public declaration on the subject was descriptive of the ruling principles of his policy. "Come, my son, I will be your father: you will lose nothing by the exchange. The conduct of your father has wounded my heart. When you are grown up, you will discharge his debt and your own. Never forget, in whatever position you may be placed by my policy and the interest of my empire, *that your first duties are towards me*, your second towards France; all your other duties, even to the people whom I may confide to your care, must be postponed to these."¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Bign. ix.
197, 199.
Thib. viii.
139, 146.
Mart. v. 338,
340. Sup.
Hurd. xi. 89,
90.

The resignation of Louis was the source of great distress to Napoleon, on which he forcibly enlarged even in the solitude of St Helena. But it was soon followed by an event which still more nearly affected him. For some years past his brother Lucien and he had been on distant terms; and he could ill brook the sturdy but honest feeling which induced that disinterested republican to refuse honours and royalty when bestowed by the imperial hand. Their rupture became irreconcilable by the refusal of Lucien to divorce his wife, an American by birth, to whom he was tenderly attached, in order to receive a princess suggested by the political views of the Emperor. He withdrew first to Rome, where he lived several years in privacy, devoted to poetry and the arts: and when the Roman States were incorporated with the French empire, he resolved to take refuge in the United States, in order to be altogether beyond the reach of his brother's imperious temper. He set sail, accordingly, for America: but was taken prisoner by two English frigates, and conducted to Malta, from whence he obtained liberty to reside on his parole in the British dominions. He fixed his residence in the first instance at Ludlow in Shropshire, where he continued to devote his whole time to literary pursuits, and the completion of an epic poem on Charlemagne, which had long occupied his attention. Shortly after this voluntary expatriation, he purchased the villa of Thorngrove, near Worcester, where he lived in affluence and elegant retirement, till the conclusion of the war. About the same time letters were intercepted by the Spanish guerillas, from Joseph, in which he bitterly complained of the rigorous mandates which he received from the Em-

27.
Flight of
Lucien Bona-
parte to
America.

March.

Aug. 5.

Dec. 12.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

¹ Thib. viii.
147, 148.

28.
General consternation in
England at
the results of
the last cam-
paign.

peror, and the perpetual mortifications to which he was exposed, and declared that if he could do so, he would willingly resign the crown, and retire to a private station.* Thus, while the Emperors of Russia and Austria, dazzled by the blaze of his military glory, were vying with each other for the honour of Napoleon's hand, his own brothers, whom he had raised from the dust to thrones, from a practical acquaintance with his tyrannical government, were seeking in preference the security of private life, and voluntarily took up their abode with his enemies, rather than incur any longer the vexations to which they were exposed from his imperious disposition.¹

The retreat of Wellington from Talavera, and the unsuccessful issue of the preceding campaign, excited the most desponding feelings in a large proportion of the inhabitants of Great Britain. The people of that country, although now strongly imbued with the military spirit, enthusiastic in support of the contest, and passionately desirous of warlike renown, were still mere novices in the military art. They were totally incapable of appreciating the merits of a system of defence which was to last for years, and in which ultimate success was to be purchased by a cautious system of defensive policy, and frequent retirement before the enemy in the outset, till the Peninsular troops had been trained to fight, and something approaching to equality of numbers in the field could be attained. Following the usual bent of popular bodies, to form their opinions from present impressions, the people never considered that a vast and admirably disciplined corps, like the French army, which had grown up with the victories of fifteen years, and was now drawn from the military strength of almost all Europe, could not be successfully resisted except by a steady perseverance at first in the most cautious policy; they forgot that it was by delay that Fabius restored the fortunes of Rome. Their idea of war was a victory followed by an immediate advance to the enemy's capital; and the moment that a retreat was commenced, they abandoned themselves to

* "I enclose an intercepted letter from Joseph to Napoleon, which seems to me to be as interesting a document as has yet appeared. It shows that he treats his brothers as tyrannically as he does other people, and gives ground to hope that his tyrannical temper will at no distant period deprive him of the advantages of the Austrian alliance."—WELLINGTON to LORD LIVERPOOL, 18th June 1811; GUNWOOD, viii. 35.

the most unmanly depression, and gave over all for lost, because the military power which had conquered all Europe was not at once crushed by twenty thousand English soldiers.

These feelings, characteristic in all ages of the great body of the people, who are usually governed by present occurrences, and incapable, when left to their own direction, of the steady foresight and sustained efforts indispensable in every department for durable success, were called forth with extraordinary violence in Great Britain in the beginning of 1810, by the unsuccessful result of the Walcheren expedition, and the successive retreats of Sir John Moore and Lord Wellington at the close of the preceding campaigns. In proportion to the unbounded hopes and expectations excited by the first brilliant success of the contest in the Peninsula, was the despondence which universally prevailed at the ultimate discomfiture of the English arms, the apparently unprofitable waste of British gallantry, and, above all, the innumerable defeats and disasters of the Spanish armies, which had now seemingly destroyed all hopes of successful resistance in the Peninsula. The Opposition, as usual, took advantage of these feelings to excite the people to such a manifestation of public opinion as might compel the termination of the war in the Peninsula, and ultimately hurl the ministers from office. The temper of the public mind at this period, and the feelings of the Opposition on the subject, may be judged of by the fact, that the common council of the city of London not merely petitioned parliament against the bill brought in by ministers for granting Lord Wellington an annuity of £2000 a-year, in consideration of the valour and skill he had displayed in the battle of Talavera, but prayed the King for "*an inquiry*" into the circumstances connected with the failure of the late expedition into the interior of Spain." The expressions made use of on this occasion deserve to be recorded, as containing a memorable example of the well-known truth, that real greatness in public life has rarely been attained save by those who, at one period, have resolutely acted in opposition to the opinions and clamours of the great body of the people;¹ and that not unfrequently the deeds of their life which have given them

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

29.
Address of
the city of
London for
an inquiry
into the con-
duct of Well-
ington.

Feb. 26.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xv. 600. City
of London's
Petition.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

30.
Extraordi-
nary expres-
sions in the
petition of
the common
council of
London.
Dec. 14, 1809.

the most durable reputation with posterity, are those which have occasioned the most violent outcry and obloquy at the moment.

The common council stated, "admitting the valour of Lord Wellington, the petitioners can see no reason why any recompense should be bestowed on him for his military conduct. Profiting by no lessons of experience, regardless of the inference to be drawn from the disgraceful convention of Cintra, and calamitous retreat of Sir John Moore, a third army, well equipped, under the orders of Sir Arthur Wellesley, was precipitated into the interior of Spain, with the same ignorance of the force and movements of the enemy. After a useless display of British valour, and a frightful carnage, that army, like the preceding one, was compelled to seek its safety in a precipitate flight, before an enemy who, we were told, had been conquered—abandoning many thousands of our wounded countrymen to the French. That calamity, like the others, had passed without any inquiry; and, as if their long-experienced impunity had put the servants of the Crown above the reach of justice, ministers have actually gone the length of advising your Majesty to confer honourable distinctions on a general, who has *thus exhibited, with equal rashness and ostentation, nothing but a useless valour.*" This address having been offered to the King, is not to be found in the Parliamentary History or Annual Register, though a petition of a similar character was presented to parliament against the grant of Wellington's pension; but it was eagerly transcribed from the English daily papers into the columns of the *Moniteur*, where it remains among many other documents which their authors would now willingly consign to oblivion; but which history, looking to the encouragement of struggling virtue under unmerited obloquy in future times, deems it its first duty to bring prominently into light.¹

When such was the temper of the Opposition party throughout the kingdom, it may well be conceived that their leaders in parliament were not slow in taking advantage of a state of public opinion which promised such great results to themselves, and threatened such

Feb. 26, 1810.
¹ *Moniteur*.
Jan. 20, 1810.
See also city
of London's
Petition to
Commons,
Feb. 26, 1810.
Parl. Deb.
xv. 600.

discomfiture to their antagonists. The preceding campaign in Spain, accordingly, was the subject of long and interesting debates in both houses of parliament; and the study of them is highly important, not merely as indicating the extent to which general delusion may prevail on the subject of the greatest events recorded in history, but as illustrative of the difficulties with which both Wellington and the government had to struggle in the further prosecution of the Peninsular contest. On the part of the Opposition it was strongly urged, on repeated occasions, by Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, Mr Ponsonby, and Mr Whitbread, that, "admitting it was proper to bestow rewards where great public services had been performed, it is difficult to see upon what ground the battle of Talavera can be considered as of that character. If a decisive overthrow has been achieved, such as that of Maida, it may be proper to confer such a distinction, even although no durable results follow from the laurels of victory; but where that is not the case, and the contest has terminated in something like a drawn battle, it is reasonable to ask, when no subsequent advance has taken place, what evidence have we that a victory at all has been gained? Now, what was the case at Talavera? The enemy's army was neither dispersed nor overthrown, and, therefore, that test of success was wanting. Then what was the grand object of the campaign? Unquestionably to advance with the aid of the Spanish armies to Madrid; and, so far is that object from having been gained, that we ourselves were in the end obliged to abandon our sick and wounded, and retire with disgrace, first behind the Guadiana, and ultimately within the frontiers of Portugal. Nor was this all. By his disastrous retreat, Lord Wellington left the flanks of his army unsupported; and the consequence was, that Sir Robert Wilson, though a most able and gallant officer, was defeated on the one flank at Escalano, and Venegas, with the best army that the Spaniards had, underwent a total overthrow at Ocana.

"Granting to Lord Wellington the praise of being an able, active, and enterprising officer, his conduct at the battle of Talavera was not such as to entitle him to the character of a good general. It was clear that the strong

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

31.

Argument of
the Opposi-
tion against
Wellington's
campaign,
and the con-
tinuance of
the war in
Spain.

**CHAP.
LXIII.**

1810.

32.

Alleged bad
generalship of
Wellington.

ground on the left had not been adequately taken possession of or secured, and the charge of cavalry in the valley was injudicious, leading, as it did, to a very heavy loss, without any adequate advantage. If the Spaniards on the right were really the incapable body of troops which his Lordship's despatches seemed to assert them to be, what must have been the temerity of the general who, supported by such troops, advanced into the heart of the enemy's territory? If they were incapable of moving in the presence of the enemy, why did he leave to them the important duty of defending the post of Talavera and the British wounded? And if this was done because a still greater force, under Soult, threatened our rear and communications, on what principle can we defend the conduct of a general who could thus move so far into the enemy's country, without having done any thing to secure his flank or rear; or how affirm that the dispositions of the inhabitants of the country are with us, when they gave no intelligence of the concentration and march of three French corps, and their approach to the theatre of war was for the first time made known by their threatening, and all but cutting off, our retreat to Portugal?

33.
And his defective system
of supply for
the army.

"Such has been the effect of want of supplies and disease upon the British army after their retreat into Portugal, that hardly nine thousand men remained capable of bearing arms to defend the frontiers of that kingdom. This was a deplorable result to succeed immediately what, we were told, had been a glorious victory. There is something inconceivable in the difficulties alleged by the English general in regard to the providing supplies for his army. How was it that the French generals experienced no such difficulty? After the battles of Austerlitz, Aspern, and Wagram, their operations never were cramped by the want of provisions. How did this happen? Because they boldly pushed forward and seized the enemy's magazines. It argues a total want of organisation, foresight, and arrangement, to be thus checked in all our operations by the alleged difficulty of obtaining that which it is the first duty of every prudent general to provide for his soldiers. In fact, the French sent out small parties after their victories, and thus

obtained supplies, while we were utterly unable to do any thing of the kind after our alleged triumphs.

"Unhappily for the country, the same ministers who had already so disgracefully thrown away all the advantages of the Spanish war, are still in power; and they have learned no wisdom whatever from the failure of all their preceding efforts. It is now plain that they could no longer look either for co-operation, or efficient government, or even for the supplies necessary for their own troops in that country. Repeated disasters, unprecedented in history for their magnitude and importance, have at length taught us the value of the Spanish alliance, and the capability of that nation to maintain a war with France. They could not plead ignorance on this subject, for it was expressly stated in a letter of Mr Secretary Canning to Mr Frere, that 'we had shed our best blood in their cause, unassisted by the Spanish government, or even by the good-will of the country through which we passed.' When government determined, in opposition to all the dictates of prudence, to continue the war in the Peninsula, they took the most injudicious possible mode of carrying it on, by directing Lord Wellington to advance into Spain, if it could be done consistently with the interests of Portugal. By doing so, we made the Spaniards abandon the system of guerilla warfare, in which they had uniformly been successful, and take up that of great battles, in which they had as uniformly been defeated. And when we did enter into war on that great scale, what have we done to support it? Why, we sent twenty-five thousand men under Wellington to Portugal, forty thousand to perish in the marshes of the Scheldt, and fifteen thousand to make a useless promenade along the coasts of Italy. These forces, if united together, would have formed a noble army of eighty thousand men, which would have effectually driven the French from the Peninsula. Instead of this, by straining at every thing, we have gained nothing, and disgraced ourselves in the eyes of the world, by putting forward immense forces which have in every quarter experienced defeat. If the war is to be conducted in this manner, better, far better, to retire from it at once, when it can be done without ruin to our own forces,¹ than persist in a

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

34.

Ministers said
to be the
cause of these
disasters.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xvi. 472, 504;
xv. 140, 146,
458, 462.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

system of policy which has no tendency but to lure the Spaniards by the prospect of assistance from their true system of defensive warfare, and then leave them exposed, by our desertion, to the sad realities of defeat."

35.
Answer of
the Admini-
stration in
support of
the war.

On the other hand, it was answered by Lord Wellesley, Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr Perceval,—
"The object of the British general was, first, to expel the invaders from Portugal; and next, to attempt the deliverance of the Spanish capital. The first object was attained by the passage of the Douro: an achievement as rapid and able as any recorded in military history, and which exposed the invading force to disasters fully equal to those which had been so loudly dwelt on as having been sustained in Sir John Moore's retreat. When Wellington advanced into Spain, he had a fair prospect of success, and he neither could nor was entitled to anticipate the refusal of Cuesta to co-operate in the proposed attack on Victor, before Sebastiani and the King came up, which, if executed as he suggested, would unquestionably have led to a glorious and probably decisive overthrow. As to the merits of the battle itself, it is alike unfair and ungenerous to ascribe the whole credit to the troops, and allow nothing to the skill, resolution, and perseverance of the commander, who with half the enemy's force achieved so memorable a triumph. Did no glory redound from such a victory to the British name? Has it not been acknowledged, even by the enemy, to have been the severest check which he had yet sustained? Is it to be reckoned as nothing, in national acquisitions, the striking a blow which gives a spirit to your soldiers that renders them wellnigh invincible? What territorial acquisitions followed the victories of Cressy, Poitiers, or Azincourt; and yet, can there be the least doubt that these glorious days have contributed more to the subsequent tranquillity of England, by the renown with which they have surrounded our name, than could have resulted from the permanent acquisition of vast provinces?

36.
The immediate
results
of the battle
of Talavera.

"But, in truth, it is a total mistake to assert that no benefit to the common cause has accrued from the battle of Talavera. What else was it that arrested the course of French conquest in the Peninsula; gave a breathing interval to the south to prepare fresh armies; liberated

Galicia and Asturias from their numerous oppressors? What else prevented the invasion of Portugal, and gained time for the equipment, disciplining, and organising of the Portuguese forces? It is in vain to suppose that an immense military force, like that of France in Spain, can be permanently arrested except by pitched battles and serious disasters; and, accordingly, the consequence of the march of the English army to Talavera has been, that the French have been stopped in their incursions into every part of the Peninsula, and instead of a vigorous offensive, have been driven to a cautious defensive in every quarter. It may be quite true that the advantages thus gained, and which were of such a magnitude as was, in the opinion of Lord Wellington, sufficient to have rendered the Spanish cause absolutely safe, had it been conducted with prudence and wisdom, may have been in a great measure thrown away, perhaps altogether lost, by the blamable imprudence and rashness with which they have subsequently rushed into conflict with the enemy in the open plain, and the dreadful overthrows which their inexperienced troops have consequently received. But neither Lord Wellington, nor ministers, are responsible for these consequences; for not only were these subsequent efforts of the Spaniards undertaken without the concurrence of the British government, or their general in Spain, but in direct opposition to the most strenuous and earnest advice of both; and, if the counsel given them had been adopted, the Spaniards would have possessed a powerful army of fifty thousand men to cover Andalusia, which would have rendered any attempt at the subjugation of that province hopeless, while the disciplined English and Portuguese armies retained a menacing position on the frontiers of Castile.

"It is true that experience has now demonstrated, that very little reliance is to be placed on the Spanish army in the field, in pitched battles; and, above all, that they are almost universally unfit to make movements in the presence of the enemy. This defect was anticipated, to a certain degree, from the outset; although it cannot be denied that Lord Wellington, from the appearance and experience of Cuesta's army, had good reason to be dissatisfied with the inefficiency of his troops

37.

Unshaken
resolution of
the Spaniards

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

during the short campaign in Estremadura. But it by no means follows from that deficiency, that it is now expedient to abandon the war in the Peninsula. If, indeed, it had appeared that the spirit of patriotism had begun to languish in the breasts of the Spaniards; if mis-carriages, disasters, and defeats had broken their courage, or damped their ardour, then it might indeed be said that farther assistance to them was unavailing. But there is still life in Spain; her patriotic heart still beats high. The perseverance with which her people have returned to the charge after repeated overthrows, reminds us of the deeds of their fathers in the days of Sertorius and the Moorish wars. The sieges of Saragossa and Gerona have emulated the noblest examples of ancient patriotism. The generous and exalted sentiments, therefore, which first prompted us to aid Spain, should still inspire us to continue that aid to the last. The contest in which she is engaged is not merely a Spanish struggle. The fate of England is inseparably blended with that of the Peninsula. Shall we not therefore stand by her to the last? As long as we maintain the war there, we avert it from our own shores. How often in nations—above all, how often in Spain—have the apparent symptoms of dissolution been the presages of new life—the harbingers of renovated vigour? Universal conquest, ever since the Revolution, has been the main object of France. Experience has proved that there are no means, however unprincipled—no efforts, however great, at which the government of that country will scruple, provided they tend to the destruction and overthrow of this country. How, then, is this tremendous power to be met, but by cherishing, wherever it is to be found, the spirit of resistance to its usurpation, and occupying the French armies as long as possible in the Peninsula, in order to gain time until the other powers of Europe may be induced to come forward in support of the freedom of the world?¹ No division took place in the House of Commons on the conduct of the Peninsular war; but in the House of Lords ministers were supported by a majority of thirty-two—the numbers being sixty-five against thirty-three.²

In reviewing, with all the advantages of subsequent

¹ Parl. Deb. xvii. 472, 505; xvi. 131, 154.

² Parl. Deb. xvii. 503.

experience, the charges here advanced against government and Lord Wellington, it seems sufficiently clear that the only part of them that was really well-founded, referred to the considerable British force which was uselessly wasted on the coast of Italy. That the Walcheren expedition was wisely directed to the mouth of the Scheldt, can be doubted by none who recollect that there was the vital point of the enemy's preparations for our subjugation; that thirty ships of the line and immense naval stores were there already accumulated; and that Napoleon has himself told us he regarded Antwerp as of such importance to his empire, that he lost his crown rather than give it up. That success was easily attainable with the force employed, has already been sufficiently demonstrated from the opinions of all the French military writers, and even that of Napoleon himself.* That the prosecution of the war in Spain was not merely expedient but necessary, must be evident to every rational person, from the consideration, that without our assistance the Peninsula would immediately have been subdued, the whole forces of Europe, from the North Cape to Gibraltar, arrayed against the British dominions, and that at least two hundred thousand French troops would have been ordered across the Pyrenees, to menace the independence of this country from the banks of the Scheldt and the heights of Boulogne. But it is impossible to allege any defence for the unprofitable display of British force on the shores of Italy. The expedition under Sir John Stuart was perfectly useless as a diversion in support of Austria, as it did not sail till the middle of June, at which time the whole forces of Napoleon were collected for the decisive struggle on the shores of the Danube. The ten thousand British troops thus wasted in this tardy and unavailing demonstration, would probably have cast the balance in the nearly equipoised contest in the Spanish peninsula. Landed on the coast of Catalonia, they could have raised the siege of Gerona, and hurled St Cyr back to Roussillon. United to the force of Wellington, they would have brought his standards in triumph to Madrid. But, ignorance of the incalculable value of time in war, and of the necessity of

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

38.

Reflections
on this de-
bate.

* *Ante*, Chap. IX. § 13, note.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

concentrating their forces upon the vital point of attack, were the two grand defects which want of warlike experience had at that time impressed upon the British cabinet; and thus they sent Sir John Stuart to the coast of Italy, when it was too late to aid the Austrians, and kept him away from Spain, when he would have been in time to have materially benefited Wellington.

39.
Important
effect which
these gloomy
views in Eng-
land had on
the conduct
of the French
government.

Severely as the government and Wellington were cramped by the violent clamour thus raised against the conduct of the war, both in parliament and throughout the country, one good and important effect resulted, which was not at the time foreseen, and probably was little intended by the authors of the outcry. This was the impression which was produced upon the French government and people, by the publication of these debates, as to the total inability of England to continue the struggle on the Continent with any prospect of success. The constant repetition in parliament, and in all public meetings, of the dreadful burdens which oppressed England from the continuance of the war, and the unbounded extent of the calamities which had befallen her armies in the last campaign, naturally inspired the belief, either that the contest would speedily be terminated by the complete destruction of the English forces, or that the British nation would interfere, and forcibly compel the government to abandon it. This opinion was adopted by Napoleon, who trusted to these passionate declamations as an index to the real feeling of Great Britain, and who, having never yet been brought into personal collision with the English troops, was ignorant alike of the profound sense of the necessity of resistance which animated the great body and best part of the people, and of the prowess which an admirable discipline and their own inherent valour had communicated to the soldiers. All the speeches on this subject in Britain were ostentatiously quoted in the *Moniteur*, and they compose at least a third of the columns of that curious record for the year 1810. The Emperor was thus led to regard the war in the Peninsula as a conflict which could at any time be brought to a conclusion, and which, while it continued, would act as a cancer that would wear out the whole strength of England. And to this impression, more

perhaps than to any thing else, is to be ascribed the simultaneous undertaking of the Russian and Spanish contests, which proved too great a strain upon the strength of his empire, and was the immediate cause of his ruin.

Having thus come to the resolution of continuing the war with vigour in the Peninsula, government applied for, and obtained, the most ample supplies from parliament for its prosecution. The termination of the contest in every other quarter by the submission of Sweden to Russia, which will be immediately noticed, enabled them to concentrate the whole forces of the nation upon the struggle in Portugal, and thus to communicate a degree of vigour to it never before witnessed in British history. The supplies to the navy were £20,000,000, those to the army were above £21,000,000, besides £5,000,000 for the ordnance. No new taxes were imposed, although a loan to the amount of £8,000,000, besides a vote of credit to the extent of £3,000,000 more, was incurred. The land forces were kept up to the number of two hundred and ten thousand; and the ships in commission in the year were one hundred and seven of the line, besides six hundred and twenty frigates and smaller vessels. The British navy at that time consisted of two hundred and forty ships of the line, besides thirty-six building, and the total numbers were ten hundred and nineteen vessels. The produce of the permanent taxes for the year 1810 was £44,795,000, and the war taxes and loans £40,000,000. The total expenditure of the year rose to the enormous sum of £89,000,000.¹*

The decisive overthrow of Ocaña having entirely destroyed the force of the Spanish army of the centre, and the Austrian alliance having relieved him of all inquietude in Germany, Napoleon deemed it high time to accomplish the entire subjugation of the Peninsula. With this view, he moved a large portion of the troops engaged in the campaign of Wagram, amounting to one hundred and twenty thousand men, across the Pyrenees, and arranged his forces in nine corps, besides the reserve on the Ebro, under the most renowned marshals of the empire. Twenty thousand of the Imperial Guard marched from Chartres and Orleans towards the Bidassoa;

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

40.
Resolution of
parliament,
and supplies
of the year.

¹ James'
Naval His-
tory, v. 320,
Table xix.
Parl. Deb.
xvi. 1044.
Ann. Reg.
1811. Chron.
310.

41.
Preparations
of Napoleon
for the cam-
paign in
Spain.

* See Appendix, A, Chap. lxiii.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

a large body of Polish and Italian troops assembled at Perpignan and entered Catalonia; and an immense battering train of fifty heavy guns and nine hundred chariots, took the road from Bayonne to Burgos. The Emperor even went so far as, in his discourse to the Senate on December 3d, to announce his intention of immediately setting out for the south of the Pyrenees.* Such was the magnitude of these reinforcements, that they raised the total effective French force in Spain, which in the end of 1809 had sunk to two hundred and twenty-six thousand men, to no less than three hundred and sixty-six thousand, of whom two hundred and eighty thousand were present with the eagles, and fit for service. Out of this immense force he formed two great armies, each composed of three corps destined for the great operations of the campaign. The first, comprising the corps of Victor, Sebastiani, and Mortier, with Dessolles' reserve, mustering about sixty-five thousand men, under the command of Soult, was destined for the immediate conquest of Andalusia; the second, under Massena, consisting of the corps of Regnier, Ney, and Junot, consisting of eighty thousand men, which assembled in the valley of the Tagus, was charged in the first instance with the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, and ultimately with the conquest of Portugal.

42.
Prodigious
extortions
and contribu-
tions in Spain
by which this
immense
force was
maintained.

Notwithstanding the enormous amount of these forces, the Emperor adhered rigidly to his system of making war support war: he reduced to 2,000,000 francs (£80,000) a month the sum to be transmitted from the imperial treasury for all his troops in the Peninsula, leaving the remaining funds for their support to be entirely drawn from the provinces to the south of the Pyrenees, which were of course exposed to the most unheard-of spoliation. To such a length was this system of regular extortion carried, that separate military governments were formed in each of the provinces of Biscay, Navarre, Aragon, Catalonia, Old Castile, and Leon—the object of which was to render the whole resources of the country available for the

* "When I shall show myself beyond the Pyrenees, the Leopard in terror will plunge into the ocean to avoid shame, defeat, and death. The triumph of my arms will be the victory of the genius of good over that of evil; of moderation, order, morality, over civil war, anarchy, and the destructive passions. My friendship and my protection will give, I trust, tranquillity and happiness to the people of Spain."—*Discourse of the EMPEROR to the Legislative Body, December 3d, 1809; Monsieur, 3d Dec. 1809.*

clothing, feeding, and pay of the soldiers. And so completely did they intercept the revenue which should have been enjoyed by Joseph at Madrid, that he had literally nothing to depend upon but the customs collected at the gates of the capital. Yet with all this machinery to extract money from the people, and with this enormous army to collect it, the resources of the country were so thoroughly exhausted, and the ruin of industry was so universal, that the troops were generally in the greatest want; their pay was almost every where thirteen months in arrear; the ministers at Madrid were starving from the non-payment of their salaries; the King himself was without a shilling: and it was as much from the necessity of finding fresh fields of plunder, as from military or political views, that the simultaneous conquest of Andalusia and Portugal was attempted.¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Belm. i.
103, 105.
Jom. iii. 407.
409. Nap. iii.
101, 102.
Wel. Desp.
vi. 552. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
4, 5.

The Spanish government was in no condition to withstand so formidable an irruption. After the destruction of the army of the centre at Ocana, they had been unequal to the task of organising a fresh force capable of defending the defiles of the Sierra Morena against so vast a host. Areizaga, indeed, had contrived; even in the short time which had elapsed since that dreadful overthrow, to collect twenty-five thousand fugitives in those celebrated passes, who repaired to their standards after their former dispersion, with that extraordinary tenacity after defeat which has always formed so remarkable a feature in the Spanish character. But they were so completely dispirited and disorganised, as to be incapable of opposing any effective resistance. The Central Junta was in the utmost state of debility, without either unity of purpose, vigour of counsel, or resolution of conduct. Destitute alike of money, consideration, or authority, it was utterly unable to stem the dreadful torrent which was about to burst upon Andalusia. The disaster of Ocana had called again into fearful activity all the passions of the people; but misfortune had not taught wisdom, nor did danger inspire resolution. A decree

49.
Preparations
for the invasion
of Andalusia by the
French.

Jan. 5.

Jan. 9.

was hastily passed to raise a hundred thousand men, which was followed a few days after by another, to distribute a hundred thousand poniards; Blake was recalled from Catalonia to command the army of Murcia;

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

intrenchments were thrown up in the defiles of the mountains at a pass of vast strength, called the Despinas Perros, where Areizaga, with twenty-five thousand men, was stationed. Echivarria had eight thousand at Santa Elena, a little in the rear, and the Duke d'Albuquerque had fifteen thousand good troops behind the Guadiana in Estremadura. • But the forces in the important defiles of the Sierra Morena under Areizaga, were in such a disorderly state that no reliance could be placed upon them, even for defending the strongest mountain position; and if once driven from their ground, it was easy to foresee that their total dissolution was at hand.¹

¹ Tor. iii. 165,
167. Nap. iii.
102, 109.
Thib. viii.
256, 257.
Jom. iii. 409.

44.
Forcing of
the passes of
the Sierra
Morena.

The French troops, during the first three weeks of January, collected in great force in the plains at the foot of the northern front of the Sierra Morena, under the nominal command of Joseph, but really directed by Marshal Soult; and on the 20th they put themselves in motion along the whole line, directing their masses chiefly against the defile of Despinas Perros, and the pass of Puerto del Rey, which were the only passes by which the passage could be effected. Hardly any resistance was made at either point. Dessolles carried the Puerto del Rey at the first charge, the troops who were defending it having retired precipitately, and dispersed at Navas de Tolosas, the scene of the desperate battle between the Moors and Christians six centuries before. At the same time, Gazan's division mounted upon the right and left of the hills commanding the frightful gorge of the Despinas Perros, and soon drove the Spanish troops from the sides of the defile. No sooner was the road opened, than Mortier poured through with his horse, foot, and cannon, in great strength, and united with Dessolles' division, who had carried the Puerto del Rey, that very night at Carolina, on the southern side of the mountains. Next day they passed over the field of Baylen, and arrived at Andujar. Meanwhile Sebastiani, with his division, forced, after some fighting, the pass of Villa Nueva de Los Infantes, and descended to the upper part of the valley of the Guadalquivir.²

Jan. 20.

Jan. 21.
² Tor. iii. 174,
178. Nap. iii.
114, 116.
Vic. et Conq.
xx. 47, 48.

Having thus accomplished the passage of the mountains, which was the only obstacle that they appre-

hended, the French generals divided their forces. Sebastiani, with the left wing, advanced against Jaen and Granada; while Soult, with the corps of Mortier and Victor, moved upon Cordova and Seville. Both irruptions proved entirely successful. Sebastiani, with the left wing, soon made himself master of Jaen, with forty-six pieces of cannon; while Areizaga's army, posted in the neighbourhood, fled and dispersed upon the first appearance of the enemy, without any resistance. Pursuing his advantages with vigour, the French general entered Granada amidst the apparent acclamations of the people, and completely dissolved the elements of resistance in that province. At the same time Joseph, with the centre, advanced to Cordova, which was occupied without bloodshed; and pushing on with little intermission, appeared before Seville on the 30th. All was confusion and dismay in that city. The working classes, with that ardent patriotism which often in a great crisis distinguishes the humbler ranks in society, and forms a striking contrast to the selfish timidity of their superiors, were enthusiastic in the national cause, and loudly called for arms and leaders to resist the enemy. But the higher ranks were irresolute and divided. The *grandees*, anxious only to secure their property or enjoy their possessions, had almost all sought refuge in Cadiz; and the junta, distracted by internal divisions, and stunned by the calamities which had befallen their country, had in a body taken to flight, and left the city without a government. Thus, although there were seven thousand troops in the town, and the people had every disposition to make the most vigorous resistance, there were no leaders to direct their efforts; and this noble city, with its foundery of cannon and immense arsenals, became an easy prey to the enemy. On the 31st, Seville surrendered, and on the day following, Joseph entered that city in triumph. A few days afterwards Milhaud, with the advanced guard of Sebastiani's corps, pushed on to Malaga. The armed inhabitants in that city made a brave but an equally ineffectual resistance. Nothing could withstand the impetuous charges of the French cuirassiers;¹ and, after sustaining a loss of five hundred killed, Malaga was taken, with a hundred and twenty

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

45.

Conquest of
Andalusia
and Granada.

Jan. 27.

Jan. 31.

Feb. 1.

Feb. 5.

¹ Tor. iii. 174.

182. Nap. iii.

114, 118.

Thib. viii.

267, 269.

Jom. iii. 410.

412. Vict. et

Cong. xx.

47, 49.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

46.
Rapid and
able march
of Albu-
querque.

Jan. 29.

Jan. 31.

pieces of cannon, and a large quantity of stores of all sorts.

These rapid successes appeared to have put an end to the war in Andalusia; but at this critical juncture a bold and fortunate movement of the Duke d'Albuquerque saved Cadiz, and prolonged the contest in the southern parts of the Peninsula. In the end of January, several members of the Central Junta had straggled into that town in their flight from Seville; but so completely denuded of their authority and consideration, that they could be regarded as little better than private individuals. Feeling the necessity of resigning a power which they had exercised to so little purpose, they passed a decree, vesting the government, in the meanwhile, in a regency of six persons, and containing various important enactments for the convocation of the Cortes, which will be the subject of consideration when the proceedings of that body are noticed in a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile, however, the danger was imminent, that this great city, the heart of the Spanish war, the seat of government, and of the whole remaining naval and military establishments of the south of Spain, would fall into the enemy's hands, in the interregnum between the cessation of the one and the establishment of another ruling power. The new regency was proclaimed on the 31st; but already a rival authority, self-constituted, under the name of the Junta of Cadiz, elected under the pressure of necessity on the flight of the Central Junta from Seville, and composed almost entirely of the mercantile class, exercised a power greater than the regency of the kingdom, and threatened to paralyse the public defence by the partition of the direction of affairs between two rival and conflicting authorities. From these dangers they were rescued by the vigour and resolution of Albuquerque. This able chief, perceiving at once, after the forcing of the Sierra Morena, that Seville was lost, and that the only chance for the kingdom was to save Cadiz, took upon himself, with true moral courage, the responsibility of disobeying his orders, which were to move to Almada, and support the Spanish left in the mountains there; and after disposing of half his forces by throwing them into Badajoz, he himself with the other half,¹ consisting of

¹ Tor. iii. 172.
Belin. i. 108.
Nap. iii. 116,
117.

eight thousand infantry and six hundred horse, set off by forced marches by Llerena and Guadalcana for Cadiz.

The fate of Europe depended on him; for, if the French had succeeded in making themselves masters of that city before his arrival there, and thereby extinguished the war in the south of Spain, there was hardly any chance that Wellington would have been able to maintain his ground against the united force of the armies of Soult and Massena in the mountains of Portugal. Every thing depended on rapidity of movement, for the imperial generals were themselves equally alive to the vast importance of getting possession of the island of Leon. The result depended upon which of the two armies should first reach its walls; and the Spanish troops, when they arrived on the banks of the Guadalquivir, fell in with the French advanced posts pushing on for the same destination. But the latter, who had much the least ground to go over, were needlessly tardy in their movements; in ten days they only advanced a hundred miles: and by marching night and day with extraordinary rapidity, Albuquerque got first, and late on the evening of the 3d of February entered Cadiz from Xeres. Feb. 3.

He instantly broke down the bridge of Zuazo, over the canal at Santi Petri, which separates the Isle of Leon from the adjoining continent of Andalusia. It was full time, for hardly was this done when the advanced posts of Victor were seen on the side of Chiclana; and next morning the French battalions appeared in great strength on the opposite shores of the straits. The arrival of Albuquerque, however, diffused universal joy; and between the troops which he brought with him, the garrison of Cadiz, and the disbanded soldiers who flocked in from all quarters, his force was raised to fourteen thousand Spanish troops. The most urgent representations were made by the regency for assistance from Portugal; five thousand British and Portuguese soldiers were speedily despatched by Wellington, and arrived in safety at Cadiz. Confidence was soon restored, from the magnitude of the garrison, the firm countenance of the English soldiers, and the assistance of the British fleet in the bay; and the government at Cadiz, undismayed by the conquest of the whole of Spain,¹ still presented, with heroic con-

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

47.

Which saves
Cadiz.

Feb. 23.

¹ Tor. iii. 172,

173. Lond. i.

445, 447,

Belm. i. 108,

109. Jom. iii.

412, 414.

Nap. iii. 116,

119.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

48.
Operations in
Catalonia.
Suchet's fall-
ure before
Valencia.

March 3.

March 17.

1 Tor. ii. 214,
217. Nap. iii.
127, 129.
Thib. iii. 272,
273. Suchet,
i. 94, 105.

stancy, an undaunted front to the hostility of Napoleon, leading on the forces of the half of Europe.

While these important events were extinguishing the war to the south of the Sierra Morena, save round the walls of Cadiz, circumstances of considerable importance, and extremely detrimental in the end to the Spanish cause, were occurring in Aragon and Catalonia. In the first of these provinces, Suchet, having received considerable reinforcements from France, undertook an expedition against Valencia at the same time that Joseph was engaged in his grand enterprise in Andalusia. His army advanced in two columns; and as the Spaniards had no forces capable of withstanding him in the field, he arrived without resistance under the walls of Valencia. He had come unprovided with heavy artillery, and in the hope that the inhabitants, intimidated by the fall of Seville and the conquest of Andalusia, would hasten to make their submission to the conqueror. In fact he had already entered into correspondence with several persons of consideration in the city, who had promised to surrender it on the first summons. But the plot was discovered; the leaders were arrested, and one of them was executed; and the government of the city being in the hands of determined patriots, all proposals for a surrender were sternly rejected. Meanwhile the guerillas, who had wisely avoided an encounter with the French troops in the field, collected in great numbers round their flanks and rear, cut off their supplies, and straitened their communications to such a degree that the general, after remaining five days before the town, in expectation of a capitulation, was obliged to retrace his steps, not without danger, to Saragossa, which he reached on the 17th of March. This check proved very prejudicial to the French interests in the east of Spain, and almost counterbalanced, in its effect upon the population of Aragon and Catalonia, the fall of Seville and conquest of Andalusia; for the Spaniards were, beyond any other people in Europe, regardless of the events of the war, and were elevated or depressed, not in proportion to its general aspect upon the whole, but according to the aspect of events in the provinces with which they were immediately connected.¹

This check before Valencia was not the only one which

the armies of Napoleon experienced at this period in this quarter of the Peninsula. Ever since the reduction of Gerona, the arms of Augereau had been unsuccessful in Catalonia; and Napoleon loudly complained, with some appearance of justice, that the great force which he had accumulated in that quarter, and which was now not less than fifty thousand men, had produced no result at all commensurate to the efforts which had been made to equip and augment it. The Spanish general, Campo-verde, in the absence of Augereau, who had gone to Barcelona, attacked and destroyed a detachment of six hundred men, which had been placed at Santa Perpetua to keep up the communication between that fortress and Hostalrich. But this success, which gave extraordinary encouragement to the Catalonians, was balanced by a defeat which O'Donnell received in the neighbourhood of Vich in the middle of February, when the Spanish loss amounted to three thousand men. In consequence of this disaster, the Spaniards were obliged to take shelter under the cannon of Taragona; and Hostalrich, which had been blockaded for two months, was closely beset, and at length reduced to the last extremity from the want of provisions. The brave governor, Estrada, however, who had borne every privation with heroic constancy, disdained to submit even in that extremity, and at midnight on the 12th of May, sallied forth to cut his way, sword in hand, through the blockading force; and although he himself fell, with three hundred men, into the hands of the enemy, the remainder, to the number of eight hundred, got clear off, and, embarking in vessels sent to receive them, joined their countrymen in Taragona. The possession of Hostalrich, however, was of great importance to the French, as, having got possession now both of it and Gerona, they were masters of the great road from Roussillon to Barcelona.¹

The return of Suchet from Valencia, and the arrival of Marshal Macdonald with considerable reinforcements from France, soon restored the French ascendancy in Catalonia. That active general resolved to take advantage of these favourable circumstances to undertake the siege of Lerida, a fortress situated between the mountains of Aragon and Catalonia, and which in ancient times had

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

49.

Fall of Hostalrich, the garrison of which cuts its way through the besiegers.

Feb. 20.

May 12.

¹ Tor. iii. 220,
224. Nap. iii.
133, 143.
Belm. i. 118,
119. Vict. et
Conq. xx. 37,
55.

50.

Siege of
Lerida, and
action at
Margalef.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

been the scene of the memorable combat between Cæsar, and Afranius and Petreius, the lieutenants of Pompey. The garrison of this fortress consisted of nine thousand men, and the governor, when summoned to surrender, at first made a gallant reply, stating, that "Lerida had never looked to any thing but its own ramparts for defence." But the vigour of his resistance was by no means in proportion to these professions. The investment was effected in the beginning of April, and the operations were conducted with such vigour, that this celebrated place, which had twice in previous wars repelled its assailants, made a much less respectable defence than might have been expected. Its importance, however, induced the Catalonians to make the utmost efforts for its relief. O'Donnell, who commanded the Spanish forces in the province, collected eight thousand chosen infantry and six hundred horse, with which he approached its walls; and on the 23d of April drew near to the French outposts round the town. They were at first driven in; but the Spaniards being quickly assailed by General Boussard with two regiments of cuirassiers, the whole were thrown into confusion, and totally defeated, with the loss of three guns, a thousand killed, and five thousand prisoners.¹

This disaster enabled Suchet to commence his operations in form before the fortress, and the breaching batteries opened with great force against the rampart on the 12th of May. The fire soon made three practicable breaches, and at night the besiegers took the outwork of Fort Garden. Next day the assault took place at all the breaches; and although the Spanish fire at the first was so violent that the heads of the French attacking columns staggered, yet at length the vigour of the assailants prevailed over the resolution of the besieged, and the storming bands made their way through in all quarters. And now commenced a scene of horror almost unparalleled even in the bloody annals of the Peninsular war. Suchet directed his troops, by a concentric movement, to drive the citizens of every age and sex towards the high ground on which the citadel stood; and the helpless multitude of men, women, and children were gradually forced into the narrow space occupied by that stronghold.² In the general confusion the governor was unable to prevent

April 23.
¹ Nap. iii.
146, 148.
Tor. iii. 226.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 26, 29.

51.
Fall of
Lerida.

² Suchet, l.
106, 130.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 26, 34.
Nap. iii. 143.
Tor. iii. 226,
237.

their entrance; nor was it possible, perhaps, for any resolution to drive back a helpless multitude of women and children upon the bayonets of the enemy. No sooner, however, were they shut in, than the French general directed a powerful fire of howitzers and bombs upon the crowded citadel, which was kept up with extraordinary vigour during the whole night and succeeding day.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

These projectiles, thrown in amongst a wretched multitude of men, women, and children, for whom it was impossible to provide either shelter or covering, produced such a tragic effect, and spread such unutterable woe in the narrow space, that the firmness of the Spanish officers yielded under the trial. At noon next day, Garcia Conde, the governor, hoisted the white flag, and the garrison surrendered, to the number of above seven thousand men, with a hundred and thirty pieces of cannon, and vast stores of ammunition and provisions. The sudden fall of this celebrated fortress gave rise at the time to strong suspicions of treachery on the part of the governor; but they seem to have been unfounded, and the capture of the citadel is sufficiently explained by the diabolical device adopted by Suchet—a refinement of cruelty which, as Colonel Napier justly observes, is not authorised by the laws of civilised war, and which, though attended, as the excesses of wickedness often are, by success in the outset, did not fail to produce disastrous results to the French arms in the end, and contributed, in conjunction with the abominable cruelty of Augereau, who hung peasants taken in arms on great gibbets erected on the road-side all the way from Gerona to Figueras, to exasperate the feelings of the people, and prolong the war in that province long after the period when, under a more humane system, it might have been terminated.¹

52.
Atrocious
cruelty by
which the
citadel was
taken.
May 14.

¹ Suchet, l.
106, 149.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 25, 32,
54. Nap. iii.
144. 157.
Tor. iii. 226,
228.

Taking advantage of the consternation produced by this frightful catastrophe, Suchet immediately proceeded against the castle of Mequinenza, a fortress situated upon the top of a steep rock, seven hundred feet high, lying at the confluence of the rivers Segra and Ebro. The difficulty of carrying on operations against a stronghold situated upon such a height, and the extreme hardness of the rock in which the trenches were to be made, were

53.
Fall of Me-
quinenza.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

insufficient to arrest the unwearied activity of the French general. The engineer officers had reported that the siege was altogether impracticable, but he nevertheless resolved to attempt it, and by the vigour of his operations speedily overcame every difficulty. The investment of the fort was effected on the 19th of May. During the next fortnight a road practicable for artillery was, with incredible labour, cut through the rocks of the neighbouring mountains, for the distance of above two miles; and at length the breaching batteries were established within three hundred yards of the place, on the night of the 1st of June. The approaches were blown out of the solid rock by the indefatigable perseverance of the French sappers and miners, and on the night of the 4th of June the town was carried by escalade. This advantage cut off the garrison from all chance of escaping by the Ebro, to which they before had access. The breaching batteries were now advanced close to the castle walls, and the fire was kept up with extraordinary vigour on both sides until the morning of the 8th, when, a great part of the rampart having fallen down, and left a wide aperture, the garrison surrendered, with forty-five guns and two thousand men.¹

June 1.

June 4.

June 8.
 1 Suchet, f.
 157, 170.
 Tor. iii. 228,
 330.

54.
 Disasters of
 Augereau in
 Catalonia,
 and his re-
 call.

At the same time Napoleon, who had been extremely displeased with Augereau for retiring during the siege of Lerida from the position which had been assigned to him to cover the besieging forces, and for having, by retreating to Barcelona, exposed Suchet's corps to the attack which it sustained from the enterprising O'Donnell, recalled him from Spain, and he was succeeded by Marshal Macdonald, who conducted the war in Catalonia both with more judgment and less ferocity. Such had been the incapacity of Augereau in the latter months of his command, that he not only failed in his great object of covering the siege of Lerida, but exposed his troops, by dispersing them in small bodies in different stations, to be cut up in detail by the indefatigable activity and skilful rapidity of General O'Donnell. This able chief, with the remains of the army which only a few weeks before had been routed at Vich, surprised and put to the sword a battalion in Villa Franca, cut off nearly a whole brigade, under Schwartz, at Manresa; and so straitened the enemy for

provisions, as to compel Augereau himself, though at the head of nearly twenty thousand men, to take refuge in Gerona, with the loss of above three thousand men. It is impossible, in contemplating the vigorous efforts thus made by the Spaniards in Catalonia, and the heroic courage with which they maintained the war against every disadvantage, and deeply dyed almost every French triumph with disaster, not to feel the most poignant regret at the want of military discernment in the British government, which detained at this critical period ten thousand English troops, amply sufficient to have cast the balance, even against the skill and energy of Suchet, in useless inactivity on the shores of Sicily.¹

CHAP
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Tor. iii.
228, 231.
Vict. et
Conq. xx. 46,
55. Nap. iii.
161, 166.
Suchet. i.
151, 170.

While Andalusia was thus at once prostrated before the enemy, and the balance on the eastern coast of Spain, notwithstanding a more resolute resistance, was inclining slowly, but sensibly, in favour of the French arms, Wellington was steadily laying the foundations of that invincible defence of Portugal which has justly rendered his name immortal. The result of the short campaign in Talavera had completely demonstrated to him that no reliance could be placed on the co-operation in the field of the Spanish armies; and that, although the aid of their desultory forces was by no means to be despised, yet it would be much more efficacious when they were left to pursue the war in their own way, and the existence of the English army was not endangered by the concentration of the whole disposable resources of the enemy, to repel any regular invasion of Spain by their forces. He saw clearly that the Spanish government, partly from the occupation of so large a portion of their territory by the enemy, and the consequent destruction of almost all their revenue, partly from the incapacity, presumption, and ignorance of the members of administration and generals of the army, was totally incapable of either directing, feeding, or paying their troops; and consequently that their armed bands could be regarded as little better than patriotic robbers, who exacted alike from friends and foes the supplies requisite for their support.²

55.
Wellington's
views on the
incapacity of
the Span-
iards.

² Gurw. vi.
47; viii. 80,
and v. 234.

Wisely resolving, therefore, to put no reliance on their

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

56.
His plan for
the defence of
Portugal,
and the ulti-
mate deliver-
ance of the
Peninsula.

i Wel. Desp.
April 20,
1810. Gurw.
vi. 47; viii.
89. Oct. 20,
1809; v. 234,
274, 275, 317.

57.
Extraordi-
nary diffi-
culties to
which Wel-
lington was
exposed.

assistance, he determined to organise in Portugal the means of the most strenuous resistance to the enemy, and to equip in that kingdom a body of men, who, being raised by the efforts of English officers to the rank of real soldiers, might, with the aid of the British army, and by the assistance of the powerful means of defence which the mountain ranges of the country afforded, maintain on the flank of the French armies in the Peninsula a permanent resistance. With this view he spent the winter in sedulously filling up the ranks, and improving the discipline of the Portuguese soldiers; and the opportune arrival of thirty-one thousand stand of arms and suits of uniform from England in the spring of 1810, contributed greatly to their improvement and efficiency. The British army was daily increasing in strength and orderly habits, from the continued rest of the winter; while the rapid progress of the vast fortifications which Wellington had begun to construct, in the October preceding, at Torres Vedras, and in interior lines between that and Lisbon, afforded a well-grounded hope, that, if manned by adequate defenders, they would prove impregnable, and at length impose an impassable barrier to the hitherto irresistible progress of the French armies.¹

The difficulties, however, with which the English general had to contend in the prosecution of these great designs, were of no ordinary kind, and would unquestionably have been deemed insurmountable by almost any other commander. The British government itself had been seriously weakened, and its moral resolution much impaired, by the external disasters of the year 1809, and the internal dissensions in the cabinet to which they had given rise. The unfortunate result of many of their enterprises, and especially of the Walcheren expedition, had not only materially diminished their popularity, but had brought them to the very verge of overthrow. The clamour raised by the Opposition in the country against any further prosecution of the war on the Continent, was so loud and vehement, and supported by so large a proportion of the middle classes, that it required no ordinary degree of firmness to persist in a system exposed to such obloquy, and hitherto attended with such dis-

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

aster. In addition to this, the unfortunate dissension between Lord Castlereagh and Mr Canning had banished from the cabinet the two men whose genius and firmness were most adequate to encounter the difficulties with which it was surrounded. The place of the former, as Secretary at War, had been inadequately supplied by Lord Liverpool—a statesman possessed, indeed, of sound judgment, admirable temper in public debate, and great tact in directing the government during ordinary periods; but without the firmness of character and clearness of perception which belong to the highest class of intellect, and therefore unfitted to take a great and commanding lead, in opposition to the current of public opinion, in the most trying crisis of the war. In civil transactions Mr Perceval, the head of the administration, was bold and intrepid; but being bred a lawyer, and accustomed only to pacific concerns, he was in a great degree ignorant of military affairs, and did not possess sufficient confidence in his own judgment on these matters to take a due share in the responsibility of the mighty contest in which the nation was engaged. Thus, though the government had fortitude enough to continue the struggle in the Peninsula, notwithstanding the retreat from Talavera, the subsequent destruction of the Spanish armies, and the loud clamour of the Opposition; yet they did so rather in compliance with the clear opinion expressed by Wellington, that the British army could keep its ground in Portugal, than from any conviction of their own on the subject; and they repeatedly stated that they threw upon him the whole responsibility connected with the maintenance of the English forces on the continent of Europe.¹*

¹ Wel. Desp. April 7, 1810.
Gurw. vi. 21, 28, 49; v. 274, 275, 280, 335.

In addition to these difficulties, which necessarily arose from the popular form of the government in Great Britain, and which are the price that every free country pays for the vast advantages of a general discussion on public affairs, the English general had to contend also with pecu-

* "The state of opinion in England is very unfavourable to the Peninsula. The ministers are as much alarmed as the public, or as the Opposition pretend to be; and they appear to be of opinion, that I am inclined to fight a desperate battle which is to answer no purpose. Their instructions are clear enough, and I am willing to act under them, although they throw upon me the whole responsibility of bringing away the army in safety, after staying in the Peninsula till it shall be necessary to evacuate it."—Desp. 21st April 1810, Gurw. vi. 48, 49.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

58.
Inefficiency
and weakness
of the Portu-
guese govern-
ment.

liar obstacles arising from the weakness and perversity of the Portuguese authorities. Notwithstanding the most vigorous representations which Wellington made to the members of the regency there, of the necessity of completing the regiments to their full nominal amount, faithfully collecting and applying the revenue, and impartially punishing all magistrates of whatever rank, who shrank from, or neglected their duty, the utmost degree of weakness, inefficiency, and corruption, prevailed throughout the entire civil department in the state. The people, indeed, were generally brave, determined, and even enthusiastic in the cause; but the persons in office partook, in a most remarkable degree, at once of the corruption of aristocratic, and the disunion of democratic, authority. The country was, in one sense, in a state of convulsion; but the spirit of the movement was, as Wellington observed, anti-Gallican, not democratic: the authorities who had been elected during the first fervour of the Revolution were, for the most part, drawn from the dignified clergy or old nobility; and they were not only in a great measure ignorant of business, or influenced by local interests and prejudices, but they entertained a nervous terror of losing their popularity—a feeling which is, of all others, the most effectual extinguisher to the utility of any public officer. Even during Massena's invasion they measured the stability of the country, and the probable issue of the contest, not by the number of troops which they could bring into the field, or the magazines and equipments which they had provided for the army, but by the lists of persons who attended their levees, and the loudness of the cheers which they received when passing through the streets of Lisbon. A government consisting of the aristocratic party, elected or supported by mere popular favour, is the weakest and least burdensome of all governments; one composed of Jacobin adventurers, who have risen to public eminence in the midst of democratic convulsions, the most fearfully energetic and oppressive. Hence, although the troops taken into British pay were nominally thirty thousand, and twenty thousand more were to be raised from the resources of Portugal, yet, between the two, never more than thirty thousand could be collected round the English standards;¹

¹ Well. Deep.
vi. 155, 168;
vii. 424, 436,
616.

and although the monthly expenses of the campaign had risen to £376,000, yet the allied army was never able to bring more than fifty-two thousand men into the field.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

It is in the firm resolution to strive at least to overcome all these obstacles, and the magnanimous determination to risk at once his popularity, military renown, and chances of glory, rather than either abandon his duty or deviate from the plan by which he saw it could alone be discharged, that the brightest page in the career of Wellington is to be found. He was fully informed of the violent outcry raised against him by the Opposition in England. No person was so well aware of the irresolution and terror of responsibility which existed in the British government, and none knew better the corruption, not only of the Portuguese regency, but of almost all the civil functionaries in their dominions. In these difficult circumstances, however, he did not despair. Disregarding alike the clamour of the populace, both in Portugal and Great Britain, the efforts of faction, and the strength of the enemy, he looked to nothing but the discharge of duty. His principles and resolution at this time cannot be better expressed than in his own words:—"I conceive that the honour and interests of the country require that we should hold our ground here as long as possible; and, please God, I will maintain it as long as I can; and I will neither endeavour to shift from my own shoulders on those of the ministers the responsibility of the failure, by calling for means which I know they cannot give, and which, perhaps, would not add materially to the facility of attaining our object; nor will I give to the ministers, who are not strong, and who must feel the delicacy of their own situation, an excuse for withdrawing the army from a position, which, in my opinion, the honour and interest of the country require it should maintain as long as possible. I think that, if the Portuguese do their duty, I shall have enough to maintain it; if they do not, nothing that Great Britain can afford can save the country; and if from that cause I fail in saving it, and am obliged to go, I shall be able to carry away the British army."¹

59.
Magnanimous resolution of Wellington to discharge his duty in the face of all clamour.

¹ Well. Desp. Jan. 14, 1810. Gurw. v. 423.

The British general had need of all his firmness and heroic sense of duty, for the forces which Napoleon was

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

60.
Preparations
for the grand
attack on
Portugal by
Massena.
May 1810.

April 21,
1810.

¹ Belm. l.
121, 122.

Nap. iii. 201,
207. App.
568.

61.
Force of
Wellington
for the
defence of
Portugal.

² Nap. iii.
261, 262.
Well. Mem.
Gurw. vii.
292.

preparing for the subjugation of Portugal were immense. The three corps of Ney, Regnier, and Junot, which were under the immediate command of Marshal Massena, consisted of eighty-six thousand men present with the eagles, all veteran soldiers.* A reserve of twenty-two thousand, under Drouet, was at Valladolid, and might be relied on to supply any waste in the main body; while General Serras, with fifteen thousand, covered the right of the army on the Escla, towards Benevente and Leon, watching the army of Galicia, and resting on the fortress of Astorga, which, after a protracted siege, had at length yielded to the arms of Napoleon. The rear and communications of the French army were covered by Bessières with twenty-six thousand men, including sixteen thousand of the Young Guard, who occupied Biscay, Navarre, and Old Castile.¹

The force which Wellington had at his disposal was little more than the half of this immense host, and the troops of which it was composed, with the exception of the English soldiers, could not be relied upon as equal in combat to the enemy. The British troops, organised in five divisions, with the cavalry under General Cotton, consisted of twenty-two thousand infantry and three thousand horse: and the Portuguese regular troops, whom General Beresford had trained and rendered most efficient, amounted to about thirty thousand more. These forces were supported by a large body of militia, of whom nearly thirty thousand might be relied upon for desultory operations, but it was impossible to bring them into the field in regular battle with any chance of success. After making allowance for the necessary detachments in the rear, and the sick, the largest force which Wellington was ever able to collect in this campaign on the frontiers of Portugal, opposite Ciudad Rodrigo, was thirty-two thousand men; while General Hill, who was stationed at Thomar and Abrantes to guard the valley of the Tagus, had about thirteen thousand more, of whom nearly two thousand were horse. Thus, for the defence of Portugal, Wellington could only collect, at the very uttermost, forty-five thousand regular troops,² which might be increased to fifty thousand when the army drew near its

* See Appendix, B, Chap. lxiii.

reserves at Lisbon ; while Massena had fully eighty thousand men under his immediate command, supported by reserves and flanking forces, from which he could draw forty thousand more.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1809.

Marshal Massena arrived on the 1st of June, took the command of the army, and immediately invested the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo. General Crauford, who commanded the English advanced guard, fell back, according to Wellington's orders, after making a gallant resistance, across the Agueda, leaving the Spanish fortress to its own resources. The investment was immediately formed, and on the 25th the breaching batteries commenced their fire with great effect upon the place. Wellington instantly hastened to the spot, and took post on the Agueda with thirty-two thousand men. That was a trying moment for the English general, perhaps the most trying that he ever underwent. He was at the head of a gallant army, which burned with desire to raise the siege. He had promised the Spaniards, if possible, to effect it. The governor and the garrison were making a brave defence : the sound of their cannon, the incessant roar of the breaching batteries, was heard in every part of the English lines ; his own reputation, that of his army, his country, appeared to be at stake. But Wellington refused, resolutely refused, to move forward a man to succour the place. He was charged, not with the defence of Ciudad Rodrigo merely, but with that of Portugal, and, eventually, with the safety and independence of the British empire. If he had descended into the plain with thirty-two thousand men, half of whom were Portuguese who had never seen a shot fired, to attack sixty-six thousand French, of whom ten thousand were admirable horse, who formed the covering force, he would have exposed his army, and probably the cause of European independence, to certain destruction. Like Fabius, therefore, he persevered in his cautious course, disregarding alike the taunts of the enemy, the cries of the Spaniards, and the reproaches of his own troops. His heart was torn, but his mind remained unmoved.* Though grievously affected

62.
Siege and fall
of Ciudad
Rodrigo.

* ——— "Assiduū hinc atque hinc vocibus heros
Tunditur, et magno perentit pectore curas—
Mens immota manet ; lachrymæ volvuntur inanes."
Æneid, iv. 446.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

July 10.
1 Tor. 258,
268. Nap.
iii. 263, 283.
Belm. i. 125.
Well. Mem.
Gurw. 292,
293. Vict.
et Cong. xx.
60, 67. Wel.
Desp. vi. 404.

62.
Combat on
the Coa.

by the necessity of abandoning the fortress to its fate, he never swerved from his resolution. The French, thus undisturbed in their operations, soon brought the siege to a successful issue. The fire kept up from their batteries was so violent that, on the 10th of July, several practicable breaches were made in the walls; and on the next day, as resistance and relief were alike hopeless, the governor surrendered the place, with his garrison of four thousand men, one hundred and twenty-five guns, and great stores of ammunition, after having made a most gallant defence.^{1*}

Having thus secured this important fortress, in which he deposited the heavy train and reserve parks of his army, Massena lost no time in moving forward across the frontier; while Wellington, in pursuance of the system he had adopted, retired before him, leaving Almeida also to its fate. Before its investment took place, however, a very gallant action occurred between the French advanced guard and General Crauford, who commanded the British rearguard, four thousand five hundred strong, on the banks of the Coa. Crauford, during the whole siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, had with this small force maintained his position on the French side of that stream; and he main-

* How severely Wellington felt the necessity under which he lay, at this period, of abandoning the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, and the vast importance of the cautious system in which he then persisted, is well stated in a despatch from the English general, and a passage in the Spanish historian, Toreno, which are equally honourable to the feelings of both. "Nothing can be more irksome to me than the operations which have been carried on for the last year; and it is very obvious that a continuance of the same cautious system will lose the little reputation which I had acquired, and the good opinion of the people of this country. Nothing, therefore, could be more desirable to me personally, than that either the contest should be given up at once, or that it should be continued with a force so sufficient as to render all opposition hopeless. In either case, the obloquy heaped upon me by the ignorant of our own country, as well as of this, and by those of this whom I am obliged to force to exertion, and who, after all, will be but imperfectly protected in their persons and property, would fall upon the government. But seeing, as I do, more than a chance of final success, if we can maintain our position in this country, although probably none of a departure from our cautious defensive system; I should not do my duty by the government, if I did not inform them of the real situation of affairs, and urge them, with importunity even, to greater exertion."—*Despatches, 19th August 1810*; Gurw. vii. 346, 347. "We feel ourselves bound to say," says Toreno, "that Wellington on that occasion acted as a prudent captain, if to raise the siege it was necessary to risk a battle. His forces were not superior to those of the enemy; and his troops and the Portuguese were not sufficiently disciplined to be able to manœuvre with effect in presence of such a foe, or feel sufficient confidence in themselves to go into battle with the enemy. The battle, if gained, would only have saved Ciudad Rodrigo, but not decided the fate of the war. If lost, the English army would have been totally destroyed, the road to Lisbon laid open, and the Spanish cause rudely shaken, if not struck to the ground."—Toreno, iii. 367.

tained it even when they approached Almeida. He was there assailed, on the 24th of July, by a French force of twenty thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry, with thirty guns. The river in the rear could be passed only by a single bridge; but by the great steadiness of the men, and the resolution with which the light troops fought, they succeeded in crossing the ravine without any considerable loss. No sooner were they passed, however, than the French, with extraordinary gallantry, dashed across the bridge; but the head of the column was swept away by the terrible fire of the British infantry and artillery; and after a bloody combat of two hours, a heavy rain separated the combatants, and Crauford retired with his division to the main body of the army. In this bloody affair, both parties sustained a loss of between four and five hundred men.¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

¹ Lond. i.
493. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
71, 73.
Gurw. vi.
364.

All obstacles to the investment of Almeida being now removed, it took place on the following day. The trenches were opened on the 15th of August. The fire of the place was at first extremely well sustained; and as the garrison consisted of four thousand Portuguese regulars and militia, and the governor, General Cox, was a man of known resolution, a protracted resistance was expected. But these anticipations proved fallacious, in consequence of a frightful catastrophe, which, at the very outset of the bombardment, deprived the besieged of all their means of defence. At daybreak of the 26th, a heavy fire commenced upon the place from sixty-five guns, to which the garrison replied during the whole forenoon with great vigour and effect; but at five o'clock in the evening a bomb was thrown, which accidentally fell into the great magazine of the fortress containing one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of powder. The terrible explosion which followed blew up the cathedral, the principal edifices in the town, a large part of the houses, and occasioned many breaches in the ramparts. The consternation produced by this frightful catastrophe was such that on the same evening the garrison mutinied, and compelled the governor, who had retired into the town, to surrender; and on the following day the garrison, still consisting of three thousand men, were made prisoners, and a hundred and fifteen pieces of heavy cannon taken.²

64.
Siege and fall
of Almeida.
Aug. 15.

Aug. 26.

² Lond. i.
494, 497.
Vict. et
Conq. xx. 71,
75. Nap. iii.
304, 306.
Well. Desp.
Gurw. vi.
364.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

65.

Retreat of
Wellington
into the
interior of
Portugal.

Wellington now retreated down the valley of the Mondego, and the dispositions of Massena soon showed that he was to follow in the same direction; the extraordinary difficulties experienced by Junot in 1808, in his advance into Portugal by the road of Abrantes, having deterred the French general from penetrating into the country by that route. For the same reason Regnier's corps, which had been posted in the valley of the Tagus opposite to Hill's division, marched rapidly across the mountains from the valley of the Tagus to that of the Mondego; upon which Hill, moving parallel to him, crossed the Tagus at Villa Velha, and moved swiftly to join Wellington by the pass of Espinoha. The French marshal's instructions had been to invade Portugal at the same time by both banks of the Tagus; but as the English general was possessed of an interior line of communication, by the bridge of Villa Velha, over the Tagus, he justly deemed it too hazardous an experiment to attempt such a division of his force in presence of an enterprising enemy, who might suddenly fall with superior force upon one division of his forces, when detached by a broad river from the other. The whole French force, accordingly, was ordered to assemble in the valley of the Mondego, on the 16th of September; and Wellington, having ascertained that the enemy were concentrating all their forces, immediately ordered Hill to join him with the right wing of the army. This important movement through the mountains was effected with great expedition, and on the 21st the two corps of the allies completed their junction at Alva, in the valley of the Mondego. Meanwhile ten thousand militia, under General Trant, were collected in the mountains between that river and Oporto, and already occupied the defiles leading to Lamego. The most peremptory orders had been given by the retreating general to lay waste the country, destroy the mills, and deprive the enemy of all their means of subsistence.¹

Sept. 21.
¹ Nap. iii.
 312, 320.
 Jom. iii. 428,
 429. Well.
 Mem. Gurw.
 vii. 296, 297.
 Belm. i. 129,
 130.

Meanwhile, however, the continued retreat of the English troops, and the multitude of fugitive peasants and proprietors who flocked into Lisbon, produced the utmost consternation in that capital. Wellington soon felt the necessity of making an effort to support the

drooping spirits of the people, and inspire additional energy into the governments of both countries. He therefore resolved to take post on the first favourable ground which might present itself, and as Massena was descending the valley of the Mondego, by the northern bank of the river, he crossed his whole army over, and took post on the summit of the ridge of BUSACO. This mountain range runs from the northern shores of the Mondego in a northerly direction, for about eight miles, till it unites with the great ridge which separates the valley of the Mondego from that of the Douro. Thus this Sierra forms a natural barrier, running across the northern bank of the Mondego; and the same ridge continues along the same mountains under the name of Sierra da Murcella, which runs in a southerly direction till it joins the great chain which separates the valley of the Mondego from that of the Tagus. On the summit of the northern portion of this range Wellington collected his whole army on the evening of the 26th, in all about fifty thousand men; while Massena, with seventy-two thousand, lay at its foot, determined to force the passage.¹

The French marshal was not ignorant of the strength of the position which the English general had now assumed, or of the perilous nature of the situation in which he was placed; for, while lying at the foot of the ridge of Busaco, he received intelligence that Colonel Trant had, with ten regiments of militia, attacked the reserve artillery and military chest near Tojal, and captured the whole, with eight hundred prisoners; and already the communication with the Spanish frontier was entirely cut off by the Portuguese light parties. But the orders of the Emperor were pressing, and he was well aware that fight he must, at whatever disadvantage.* Next day, therefore, collecting all his force, Massena made preparations for a desperate attack upon the English

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

66.

He crosses
the Mondego,
and takes
post at
Busaco.

Sept. 26.

1 Well. Mem.

vii. 296; vi.

445, 446.

Jom. iii. 429,

430. Nap.

iii. 321, 322,

324.

67.

Night before
the battle of
Busaco.

Sept 26.

* In an intercepted letter from Napoleon at this period, to Massena, he says, "Lord Wellington has only eighteen thousand men, Hill has only six thousand—and it would be ridiculous to suppose that twenty-five thousand English can balance sixty thousand French, if the latter do not trifle, but fall boldly on, after having well observed where the blow may be given. You have twelve thousand cavalry, and four times as much artillery as is necessary for Portugal. Leave six thousand cavalry and a proportion of guns between Ciudad Rodrigo, Alcantara, and Salamanca, and with the rest commence operations."—NAP. iii. 307, 308.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

Sept. 27.

position, at daybreak of the morning of the 27th. The British army, during the night, lay in dense masses on the summit of the mountain. The sky was clear, and the dark rocky eminences rising on both sides of the pass, were crowned by the fires of innumerable bivouacs. The veterans in the English army, accustomed to similar scenes of excitement, slept profoundly on their stony beds; but many of the younger soldiers, who were now to witness a battle for the first time, were kept awake by the grandeur and solemnity of the scene around them. As the first streaks of dawn were beginning to appear over the eastern hills, a rustling noise was heard in the wooded dells which ran up to the crest of the mountains. It arose from the French outposts, who, stealing forward unobserved during the night, had thus got so close to the piquets of the English position without being perceived. The alarm was instantly given, and the troops started to their arms at all points.¹

¹ Gurw. vi.
446, 447.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 83, 85.
Nap. iii. 331.

68.
Battle of
Busaco.

It was full time, for, in a few minutes more, the French in two massive columns were upon them. Ney, with three divisions, numbering fully twenty-five thousand combatants, advanced against the British left, by the great road leading to the convent of Busaco; while Regnier, with two, moved by St Antonio de Cantara, against their right, about three miles distant. The first, headed by Loison's division, preceded by a cloud of light troops, came rapidly up the wooded hollow which leads to Busaco, and the British sharpshooters, driven before them, soon emerged from the woods, breathless and in disorder. Crauford, whose division stood at that point, had stationed his artillery most advantageously to play upon the enemy during their ascent from the hollow; but though the guns were worked with extraordinary rapidity, nothing could stop the undaunted advance of the French troops. Emerging bravely from the hollow, they soon reached the edge of the mountain. The British artillery was quickly drawn to the rear. The shout of victory was already heard from the French line, when suddenly Crauford, with the 43d and 52d regiments, springing out of a hollow behind the highest part of the ridge, where they lay concealed, appeared on the summit,² and eighteen hundred British bayonets sparkled on

² Vict. et
Conq. xx. 83,
87. Nap. iii.
331, 333.
Wel. Desp.
30th Sept.
1810. Gurw.
vi. 446, 447.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

the crest of the hill. The head of the French column instantly fired, but in vain. It was broken and driven back. Both its flanks were overlapped by the English line, and three terrible discharges, within a few yards' distance, drove them headlong down, in wild confusion, with dreadful loss, to the bottom of the hollow.

The attack on the British right by the two divisions of Regnier's corps, met with no better success. The ground in that quarter was indeed of comparatively easy ascent; and although the British and Portuguese skirmishers opposed a vigorous resistance, and twenty pieces of cannon played incessantly on the advancing column, yet nothing could arrest the ardour and gallantry of the French, who mounted with an intrepid step up the hill, and after routing a Portuguese regiment stationed before them, established themselves on the summit, and were beginning to deploy to the right and left. The British position in this point appeared to be carried, and the third division, part of which had been forced to give way, could with difficulty maintain itself against the dense and intrepid column which, wheeling to the right and left, and moving swiftly along the summit of the ridge, had forced itself into the centre of the line. General Leith and General Picton, seeing the danger, brought up their divisions, and charged the enemy with such vigour that, after a desperate struggle, they were hurled down the hill, the British firing upon them as long as their muskets would carry, but not pursuing, lest their ranks should be broken, and the crest of the hill be again won. The other French division of Regnier's corps, which advanced up a hollow way, a little to the left of his main column, was repulsed by the left of Picton's division, before they reached the summit of the mountain. After these bloody defeats, the French made no attempt again to carry the top of the ridge, though Loison and Marchand maintained a long and obstinate conflict in the hollows at its foot; but their efforts were effectually held in check by the brigades of Pack and Spencer. At length, towards evening, Massena, wearied of the fruitless butchery, drew off his troops, after having sustained a loss of eighteen hundred killed and three thousand wounded,¹

69.
Bloody defeat of the French.

¹ Nap. iii. 329, 334. Gurw. vi. 446, 450. Vict. et Conq. xx. 82, 87. Belm. I. 131.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

among whom were Generals Foy and Merle, while the total loss of the allies was not above thirteen hundred men.

70.
Important
results of this
battle.

The battle of Busaco produced an astonishing effect at the time at which it was fought; and, in its ultimate consequences, was beyond all question one of the most important that took place in the whole Peninsular war. It for the first time brought the Portuguese troops into battle with the French, and under such advantageous circumstances as at once gave them a victory. Incalculable was the moral effect of this glorious triumph. To have stood side by side with the British soldiers in a pitched battle, and shared with them in the achievement of defeating the French, was a distinction which they could hardly have hoped to attain so early in the campaign. Wellington judiciously bestowed the highest praises upon their conduct in this battle, and declared in his public despatch, "that they were worthy of contending in the same ranks with the British soldiers in this interesting cause, which they afford the best hopes of saving." It may safely be affirmed that, on the day after the battle, the strength of the Portuguese troops was doubled. The sight of this auspicious change dispelled every desponding feeling from the British army. No presentiments of ultimate discomfiture were any longer entertained. The plan of defence which the far-seeing sagacity of their chief had formed, revealed itself to the meanest sentinel in the ranks; and the troops of both nations prepared to follow the standard of their leader wherever he should lead them, with that ready alacrity and undoubting confidence which is at once the forerunner and the cause of ultimate triumph.¹

¹ Well. Desp.
30th Sept.
1810. Gurw.
iv. 446, 449.

71.
Massena
turns the
British left.

Wellington has since declared, that he expected that the battle of Busaco would have stopped the advance of Massena into Portugal: and that, if the French general had been governed by the principles of the military art, he would have halted and retired after that check; and the English general wrote to Romana immediately after the battle, that he had no doubt whatever of the success of the campaign.² But fortunately for England and the cause of European freedom, Massena was forced on by that necessity of advancing in the hazardous pursuit of doubtful success which afterwards drove Napoleon to

² Wellington
to Romana,
30th Sept.
1810. Gurw.
vi. 450; and
3d Nov. 1810,
Gurw. vi. 552.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

Moscow, and is at last the consequence and the punishment, both in civil and military affairs, of revolutionary aggression. Impelled by this necessity, the French marshal, finding that he could not carry the English position by attack in front, resolved to turn it by a flank movement; and accordingly, on the following day, he moved on his own right, through a pass in the mountains which led to Sardao, and brought him on the great road from Oporto to Coimbra and Lisbon. To attempt such a flank movement with an army that had sustained so severe and bloody a check, in presence of a brave and enterprising enemy, was a hazardous undertaking; but the French general had no alternative but to run the risk, or re-measure his steps to the Spanish frontier. Wellington, from the summit of the Busaco ridge, clearly perceived the French troops defiling in that direction on the evening of the 28th; but he wisely resolved not to disturb the operation. By attacking the French army when in march, he might bring the Portuguese levies into action under less favourable circumstances than those in which they had recently fought, and which might weaken or destroy the moral influence of the victory just achieved. His policy now was to leave nothing to chance. Behind him were the lines of Torres Vedras, now completely finished, and mounted with six hundred guns; against which he was well convinced all the waves of French conquest would beat in vain.¹

Accordingly he immediately gave orders for the army to retire to their stronghold. The troops broke up from their position at Busaco on the 30th, and driving the whole population of the country within their reach before them, retired rapidly by Coimbra and Leyria, to Torres Vedras, which the advanced guard reached on the 8th October; and the whole army was collected within the lines on the 15th. The French followed more slowly, and in very disorderly array; while Trant, with the Portuguese militia, came up so rapidly on their rear, that on the 7th of October he made himself master of Coimbra, with above five thousand men, principally sick and wounded, who had been left there. This disaster, however, made no change in the dispositions of the French marshal.² Pressing resolutely forward, without any regard

¹ Gurw. vi. 552. Belm. i. 132. Jom. iii. 432. Nap. iii. 336, 340.

² Wellington retires to Torres Vedras.

³ Well. Desp. 30th Sept. 1810. Gurw. vi. 448, 450.; and Mem. vii. 297. Nap. iii. 336, 351. Jom. iii. 432, 433. Belm. i. 132, 133.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1810.

either to magazines, of which he had none, or to his communications in the rear, which were entirely cut off by the Portuguese militia, he marched headlong on, and arrived in the middle of October in sight of the lines of Torres Vedras, of which, strange to say, he had never before heard, but which now rose in appalling strength to bar his farther progress towards the Portuguese capital.

73.
Description
of the lines of
Torres
Vedras.

The lines of Torres Vedras, on which the British engineers had previously been engaged for above a twelve-month, and which have acquired immortal celebrity from being the position before which the desolating torrent of French conquest was first permanently arrested, consisted of three distinct ranges of defence, one within another, which formed so many intrenched positions, each of which required to be successively forced before the invading army could reach Lisbon. The first, which was twenty-nine miles long, extended from Alhandra on the Tagus to Zezambre on the sea-coast. The second, in general about eight miles in the rear of the first, stretched from Quintella on the Tagus, to the mouth of the St Lorenza on the sea. The third, intended to cover the embarkation of the army, extended from Passo d'Arcos on the Tagus, to the Tower of Jonquera on the coast. Within this interior line was an intrenched camp designed to protect the embarkation of the troops, if that extremity should become necessary, and it rested on Fort St Julian, whose high ramparts and deep ditches rendered any attempt at escalade impracticable; so that, in the event of disaster, the most ample means were provided for bringing away the troops in safety. Of these lines, the second was incomparably the strongest, and it was there that Wellington had originally intended to make his stand, the first being meant rather to retard the advance of the enemy and take off the first edge of his attack, than to be the permanent resting-place of the allied forces. But the long delay of Massena at the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, had given so much time to the English engineers, that the first line was completed, and deemed susceptible of defence, when the French arrived before it. It consisted of thirty redoubts placed on a ridge of heights, on which were mounted, in all, one

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

hundred and forty guns; the great fort of Sobral, in the centre, bristling with forty-five pieces of heavy cannon, was perched upon an eminence that overlooked the whole exterior lines, and from it signal-posts communicated over their whole extent. An admirable road, running along the front of the position, enabled one part of the army to communicate rapidly with the other; the highways piercing through this terrible barrier were all palisadoed; the redoubts were armed with chevaux-de-frise, and a glacis was cut away to make room for their fire; and the intervening spaces which were not fortified, were formed into encampments for the troops, under shelter of the guns of one or other of the works, where they might give battle to the enemy with every prospect of success. On ~~the~~ whole lines, no less than six hundred pieces of artillery were mounted on one hundred and fifty redoubts. Neither the Romans in ancient, nor Napoleon in modern times, have left such a proof of their power and perseverance; and they will remain in indestructible majesty to the end of the world, an enduring monument of the grandeur of conception in the chief who could design, and the nation which could execute, such a stupendous undertaking.¹

¹ Belm. i.
133, 136.
Nap. iii. 351,
359. Jom. iii.
433, 434.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 93, 95.

The situation of the English army in this astonishing position, was as favourable as the ground which they occupied was carefully fortified. By drawing so close to the centre of his power, Wellington had greatly augmented the physical strength of his forces. Strong reinforcements arrived from England just after the troops entered the lines; and the Marquis Romana, who was summoned up by Wellington to concur in the defence of the chief stronghold which still maintained the independence of the Peninsula, joined on the 20th of October with five thousand men. There were now about thirty thousand English troops in the front line, besides twenty-five thousand Portuguese and five thousand Spaniards, in all sixty thousand men, perfectly disposable and unfettered by the care of the fortifications; while a superb body of marines that had been sent out from England, the militia of Estremadura and Lisbon, and the Portuguese heavy artillery corps, formed a mass of nearly sixty thousand additional combatants, of great value in defending positions, and man-

74.
Junction of
Romana, and
admirable
position of
the British
army.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1810.

ning the numerous redoubts which were scattered through the lines. Altogether, before the end of October, one hundred and thirty thousand men received rations within the British lines; while twenty ships of the line, and a hundred large transports, provided the sure means of drawing off the army in case of disaster. Yet such were the inexhaustible resources which the vigour and activity of government had provided for this enormous warlike multitude, that not only was no want experienced during the whole time that the army lay in the lines of Torres Vedras; but the combatants of all descriptions, and the whole pacific multitude who had taken refuge with them, amounting with the population of Lisbon to at least four hundred thousand more, were amply provided with subsistence, and the troops of every description never were so healthy or in such high spirits.* The military annals of no age of the world have so stupendous an assemblage of military and naval strength to commemorate in such a position; and it was worthy of England, which had ever taken the lead in the cause of European deliverance, thus to stand forth, with unprecedented vigour, in the eighteenth year of the war.¹

¹ Nap. iii.
358, 359.
Belm. i. 134,
135. Well.
Mem. Gurw.
vii. 297, 298.
Jorn. iii. 433,
434. Vict. et
Conq. xx.
101, 102.

75.
Continued
distresses of
the French.

Massena, with all his resolution, paused at the sight of this formidable barrier, and employed several days in reconnoitring the lines in every direction, while his troops were gradually collecting at the foot of the intrenchments. Much time was consumed in endeavouring to discover a weak point in which they could be assailed with some prospect of success. But although the outer line exhibited a front in several places many miles in length, without any intrenchments—and the orders of Napoleon were positive that he should immediately attack if he had the least chance of success—yet the great advantage derived by the allies from the redoubts with which their position was strengthened, and which enabled the English general to throw his whole disposable force upon

* An interesting incident occurred when the troops were lying in this position. In one of the advanced fieldworks, within range of the enemy's guns, a company of soldiers was observed lying on the ground, clustered round their captain, who was reading aloud; and the tale, to which the men were listening attentively, was interrupted only by a loud shout when any of the cannon-balls struck the bank behind which they were lying. It was Captain, now Sir Adam, Ferguson, who was reading to his company the description of the battle in the sixth canto of the "*Lady of the Lake*," which had just been published, and reached the army.—LOCKHART, *Life of Scott*, ii. 350.

any point that might be assailed, rendered it evidently hopeless to make the attempt. In the centre of the British army, twenty-five thousand men were encamped close round the great redoubt of Sobral, upon the Monte Agraca, who could have reached any menaced point of the line in two hours. The French general, therefore, contented himself with sending off Foy to Paris, under a strong escort, to demand instructions from the Emperor.¹

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

¹ Jom. iii.
435. Gurw.
vii. 54, 55,
298.

Meanwhile, the contest between the two armies was reduced to the question—Who would starve first? Massena, fondly hoping that Wellington would quit his lines to attack him in his own position, or that the British government, or the regency at Lisbon, would be intimidated by the near approach of his army, and abandon the contest, held out for above a month, until he had consumed every article of subsistence which the country occupied by his troops afforded; and the men, severely weakened by disease, were reduced to the utmost want and misery. The Portuguese militia, fifteen thousand strong, drew round his rear, and became so adventurous that they cut off all his communications, and confined his army to the resources of the ground which it actually occupied. Yet such was the power of extracting the resources of a country which long practice had given to the French generals, that we have the authority of the English general for the assertion, that Massena contrived to maintain sixty thousand men and twenty thousand horses for two months, in a country in which Wellington could not have maintained an English division, even with all the advantages of British wealth and of the favourable inclination of the inhabitants. At length, however, every article in the country being consumed, and the inhabitants, whom the French had oppressed, as well as themselves, reduced to utter starvation, Massena broke up from his position on the 14th of November, and, for the first time since the accession of Napoleon, the French troops COMMENCED A LASTING RETREAT.²

76.
Who at
length retreat.

² Well. Desp.
Gurw. vii.
54, 55, 298,
299. Mas-
sena's Report
to Napoleon,
29th Oct.
1810. Belm. i.
App. 58.

No sooner was the joyful report brought in by the outposts that the French army was retiring, than the British issued from their intrenchments, and Wellington commenced a pursuit at the head of twenty thousand men. Desirous, however, of committing nothing to

77.
Position of
the French at
Santarem.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1810.

chance in a contest in which skill and foresight was thus visibly in a manner compelling fortune to declare in his favour, he did not press the French rearguard with any great force, but despatched Hill across the Tagus to move upon Abrantes, while the bulk of the army followed on the great road by Cartaxo, towards Santarem. But Massena, whose great military qualities were now fully awakened, had no intention of retreating to any considerable distance; and after having retired about forty miles, he halted at the latter town, and there, with much skill, took up a position eminently calculated to combine the great objects of maintaining his ground in an unassailable situation, and at the same time providing supplies for his army. A strong rear-guard was rested on Santarem—a town with old walls, situated on the top of a high hill, which could be approached only by a narrow causeway running through the marshes formed by the Rio Major and the Tagus. While this formidable position, the strongest in Portugal to an army advancing from the westward, effectually protected his rear, the main body of his troops was cantoned behind in the valley of the Zézere, the rich fields of which, giving food to a hundred and ten thousand inhabitants, afforded ample supplies of grain, while the extensive mountains on either side yielded a very large number of cattle.¹

¹ Well. Memoir, Gurw. viii. 478, 479; and Deep. 5th Jan. 1811. Belm. i. 163. Jom. iii. 491, 493.

78. Wellington declines to attack him, and Massena at length retires.

The question of attacking the enemy in this strong ground was well considered by Wellington, but finally abandoned, from a conviction that such an attempt could not, from the flooded state of the marshes on either side, succeed without immense loss; and that to hazard it, would be to expose the allied army to the chances of war, while certainty of ultimate success was in their power. Magnanimously sacrificing his passion for glory to his sense of duty, therefore, Wellington resolved not to run the risk of an attack. He contented himself with taking up a position in front of Santarem, and narrowly watching the Tagus, on which the French marshal was preparing boats and all the materials for passing the river. If he could have succeeded in that enterprise, and transported the seat of war into the Alentejo, he would have reached a country hitherto

untouched, and offering resources of every kind for his army. But Wellington anticipated his design, and detached Hill with two divisions to the opposite bank of the Tagus, where he was reinforced by a large part of the militia of that province. That active general guarded the banks of the river so effectually, and established batteries upon all the prominent parts with such skill, that the French generals found it impossible to effect the passage. Thus, Massena was reduced to maintain his army entirely from the resources he could extract from the northern bank of the Tagus; and although he was joined by Drouet's corps with ten thousand men in the end of December, yet he did not deem himself in sufficient strength to attack the English army. Meanwhile the British government, fully roused at last to the vast importance of the war in Portugal, and the fair hopes of conducting it to a successful issue, made great efforts to reinforce their army. The troops embarked were delayed by contrary winds for above six weeks after they had been put on board; but at length they set sail on the 20th of February, and landed at Lisbon on the 2d of March. No sooner did the French marshal hear of their arrival, than he broke up with his whole forces, taking the road through the mountains to Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo: and Wellington, still keeping Hill, with two divisions, in the Alentejo, to render assistance to the Spaniards, who were at this time hard pressed in Estremadura, commenced the pursuit with forty thousand British and Portuguese troops.¹

It was hard to say whether the position of the French English general was most critical, when Massena thus, in good earnest, began his retreat from Portugal; for such, during the winter, had been the progress of the French in Estremadura, that it was extremely doubtful whether the British would not speedily be threatened with invasion by a formidable army on the side of Elvas and the Alentejo. Napoleon was no sooner informed of the serious aspect of the war in Portugal, than he ordered Soult to confide to Victor the tedious duty of blockading Cadiz, while he himself should march with all his disposable forces upon Estremadura and Badajoz. In pursuance of these directions, that able chief set out from

March 2 1811.
1 Well. Desp.
5th Jan. 1811;
and Mem.
viii. 478, 479,
480. Nap. iii.
392, 401, 452,
455. Belin. i.
163, 165.
Jom. iii. 491,
494.

79.
Operations of
Soult in Es-
tremadura.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1811.

Jan. 22.

Jan. 23.

Feb. 6.

Seville on the 2d of January, with twenty thousand men, taking the road by Llerena for Badajoz. The troops which Romana had left under Mendizabel in that province, after he himself joined Wellington at Torres Vedras, consisted only of two Spanish divisions of infantry, and a brigade of Portuguese cavalry, not amounting in all to twelve thousand combatants. Too weak to oppose any resistance to Soult's considerable force, these troops, which were under the command of Mendizabel and Ballasteros, retired under the cannon of Badajoz and Olivenza. Four thousand men, imprudently thrown without any provisions into the latter fortress, surrendered after twelve days, on the 22d of January; and Soult, then collecting all his troops, took up a position before Badajoz. No sooner was he informed of the danger of that important fortress, than Wellington resolved to despatch Romana, with the two divisions which had so seasonably joined him at Torres Vedras, to co-operate in its relief. Just as he was preparing, however, to set out on this important expedition, this noble Spaniard, at once the bravest, the most skilful, and most disinterested of all the Peninsular generals, was seized with a disease in the heart, of which he suddenly died at Cartaxo.* His loss was severely felt by the Spanish army; for Mendizabel, who succeeded to the command, was totally disqualified for the duty with which he was intrusted. On the 30th of January, the Spanish divisions from Wellington's army joined the remainder of Mendizabel's troops, with which, in the first week of February, he took up a position under the cannon of Badajoz, with his right resting on the fort of St Christoval, forming one of the outer walls of that city. The arrival of this formidable reinforcement rendered Soult's situation extremely critical; for the necessity of keeping up his communications had reduced the forces under his command to sixteen thousand men, and the Spaniards, with a force nearly equal, occupied a strong position, resting on the cannon of the fortress.¹

¹ Well. Mem. Gurw. viii. 475, 476. Jom. iii. 481, 483. Helm. i. 162, 163. Tor. iv. 12, 20.

* "In Romana," said Wellington, "the Spanish army have lost their brightest ornament, his country their most upright patriot, and the world the most strenuous and zealous defender of the cause in which we are engaged; and I shall always acknowledge with gratitude the assistance which I received from him, as well by his operation as by his counsel, since he had been joined with this army."—WELL. *Desp.* 26th January 1811; Gurw. vii. 190.

From this critical position he was soon relieved by the astonishing negligence and fatuity of the Spanish general, which brought destruction on his own army, and ultimately occasioned the fall of that important fortress, with the protection of which he was intrusted. It was regained only in after times by torrents of English blood. Wellington had repeatedly advised Mendizabel to strengthen his position under the walls of the place with intrenchments, in order that he might possess an impregnable station from which he might co-operate in its defence; and, if he had done so, he would in all probability have preserved it for the Spanish arms. Such, however, was his ignorant presumption, that he deemed wholly unnecessary to follow this advice: and as his position was separated from that of the French by the Guadiana and the Gebora, both of which were flooded with rains, he contented himself with breaking down a bridge over the latter stream, and left his army in negligent security on its bank. On the 18th of February, however, Soult, observing that the water of the rivers had fallen, conceived the audacious design of passing both, and surprising the Spaniards amidst their dream of security. Late on that evening he forded the Guadiana at the French ferry, four miles above the confluence of the Gebora. That stream, however, was still to cross: but next morning, before daybreak, the passage was accomplished under cover of a thick mist; and, as the first dawn broke, the Spanish outposts near the ruined bridge were alarmed by the tirailleurs, who were already on the opposite bank. The cavalry forded five miles higher up, and speedily threatened the Spanish flank, while Mortier, with six thousand foot, assailed their front. The contest was only of a few minutes' duration: horse, foot, and cannon were speedily driven together in frightful confusion into the centre; the cavalry cut their way through the throng and escaped; but the infantry were almost all slain or made prisoners. Mendizabel fled with a thousand men to Elvas; two thousand got into Badajoz: but eight thousand, with the whole artillery, were taken; and not a remnant of the army of Estremadura remained in the field.¹

Soult immediately resumed the siege of Badajoz, but

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

80.
Total defeat
of Mendiza-
bel at the
Gebora.

Feb. 18.

¹ Tor. iv. 20,
22. Jom. iii.
483, 484.
Nap. iii. 434,
436. Well.
Desp. Gurw.
vii. 278; and
viii. 478.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

81.
Siege and fall
of Badajoz.

March 9.

with little prospect of success, for the ramparts were of great strength; the garrison consisted of nine thousand men, amply supplied with provisions; and the extreme necessities of Massena's army on the Tagus, rendered it more than doubtful whether he would not speedily be driven to a retreat, and Beresford approach with two English divisions to raise the siege. From this difficulty he was again relieved by his good fortune, and the treachery of the Spanish governor of the fortress. Manecho, who first had the command, was a veteran of approved courage; and so far from being discouraged by the rout of the Gebora, he vigorously prepared for his defence, and gave out that he would rival the glories of Gerona and Saragossa. But this gallant Spaniard was unfortunately killed a few days after the fire began: and Imaz, who succeeded to the command, was a man of a very different stamp. Without vigour or resolution to keep up the spirits of his troops, he was, what was rare among the Spaniards, accessible to bribes from the enemy. Under his irresolute or treacherous management, the enemy's works rapidly advanced, the rampart was broken down in one part, and the fire of the place considerably weakened, though the enemy had only six battering guns, of which one was dismounted. Still the breach was not practicable; provisions were plentiful; the garrison was yet eight thousand strong; a great disaster had befallen the French in Andalusia, and advices had been received by three different channels, from Wellington, that Massena was in full retreat; that Beresford, with twelve thousand men, was rapidly approaching, and that in a few days the fortress would be relieved. Don Juan Garcia, the second in command, was clear in a council of war to hold out. Camerio, the chief of the artillery, was of the same opinion: but though Imaz voted with them in the council, he, on the same day, shamefully surrendered the place with eight thousand men, and a hundred and seventy guns. In forty-eight hours Beresford arrived, and the fortress, but for this treachery, would have been relieved.¹

Soult had no sooner crowned with this marvellous success his short but brilliant campaign, in which, with

¹ Tor. iv. 23,
25. Nap. iii.
450, 451.
Well. Desp.
viii. 480, 482;
and Desp.
20th March
1811. Gurw.
vii. 371.

a force not exceeding twenty thousand men, he had carried two fortresses, and taken or destroyed an equal number of the enemy, than he returned with all imaginable expedition to Andalusia, where his presence was loudly called for by a disaster, all but decisive, which had occurred to the blockading force before Cadiz during his absence. Sir Thomas Graham, who commanded the British and Portuguese troops in that city, was encouraged by the great diminution of the besieging force under Victor, in consequence of Soult's absence, to try an expedition, with a view to raise the siege. The allies sailed on the 21st, and landed at Algesiras on the day following; an attack was fixed for the 28th February; but, owing to the prevalence of contrary winds, it did not take place for a week later. Graham had collected four thousand British infantry and two hundred horse at Tarifa; on the 29th, La Pena landed with ten thousand Spanish troops; and, taking the command of the whole allied force, moved against the enemy. In a few days his force was increased by the guerillas, who came in from every direction, to twelve thousand foot and eight hundred horse. Meanwhile, however, the French had called in their troops from all quarters, and fifteen thousand men were assembled round the standards of Victor before Cadiz, besides five thousand at Medina Sidonia, and other places in his rear. The allies, however, noways daunted, advanced to raise the siege; and on the 5th reached the heights of BARROSA, about four miles from the mouth of the Santi Petri, when Victor came out of his lines to give them battle.¹

General Graham was extremely anxious to receive the attack on the heights of Barrosa, where his little band would have had an excellent position to repel the enemy. La Pena, however, ordered him to move through the wood of Bermeya towards the sea-coast; but no sooner did he commence this movement, than the Spanish general followed after him, leaving the important ridge of Barrosa, the key of the whole ground, unoccupied. The moment Victor was apprised of this, he directed his whole disposable force, about nine thousand strong, composed of the divisions of Ruffin, Laval, and Vilatte, all

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

82.

Operations
before Cadiz.

Feb. 28.

Feb. 29.

March 5.

¹ Graham's

Desp. 6th

March 1811.

Gurw. vii.

382. Nap. iii.

440. Tor. iv.

26, 33.

83.

Battle of

Barrosa.

March 6.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

veterans inured to victory, with fourteen guns, to attack the heights. Some Spanish troops, whom they met on their ascent, were quickly overthrown; and Graham, while still entangled in the wood, was apprised by the torrent of fugitives which came after him, that the heights were won, and the enemy posted on the strong ground in his rear. An ordinary general would have thought only in such a crisis of retiring to the Isle of Leon, and extricating himself as rapidly as possible from his perilous situation; but Graham, who had the eye as well as the soul of a great commander, at once perceived, that to attempt this in presence of such an enemy, with the Spaniards in full retreat, and already out of sight, would rapidly bring on disaster. He instantly took his course: ten guns, under Major Duncan, wheeled into line, and commenced a destructive fire on the enemy's masses, which were now descending the hill; and the infantry, hastily formed into two columns, under Colonel Wheatley and General Dilkes, faced about and advanced to meet the foe.¹

¹ Sir T. Graham's Desp. 6th March 1811. Gurw. vii. 391. Nap. iii. 42. Belm. i. 172, 173.

84.
Victory of the English.

The onset at both points was exceedingly fierce. The French, as usual, came on in column, preceded by a cloud of gallant light troops, who concealed the direction of their attack by a rapid fire; and Laval's division advanced, unchecked even by the admirably directed fire of Duncan's guns, which discharged round-shot and canister with extraordinary rapidity. At length, having reached the British line, they were met by a determined charge of the 87th and 28th regiments, broken and driven back, with the loss of two guns and an eagle. The routed division strove to rally on their reserve, but they too were thrown into disorder, and the battle was won on that side. Meanwhile Dilkes's column was not less successful against Ruffin's division, which was still on the brow of the hill. The Guards, supported by two British regiments, there boldly mounted the steep: Ruffin's men, confident of victory, descended half-way to meet them, and with loud shouts the rival nations met in mortal conflict. The struggle was very violent, and for some time doubtful; but at length the French were forced back to the top, and ultimately driven down the other side with extraordinary slaughter.² Ruffin and Chau-

² Sir T. Graham's Desp. 6th March 1811. Gurw. vii. 382. Belm. i. 173. Nap. iii. 442, 443.

don Rousseau, both generals of division, being severely wounded and taken. The two discomfited wings retired by converging lines to the rear, and soon met.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

They tried to retrieve the day, but in vain : Duncan's guns, following close after them, with a rapid and well-sustained fire played on their ranks ; Ponsonby, with his two hundred German horse, charged their retiring cavalry, overthrew them, and took two more guns ; and if La Pena had sent merely his eight hundred Spanish dragoons and powerful horse-artillery to the fight, Victor must have sustained a total defeat, and raised the siege of Cadiz. But not a man did that base general send to the aid of his heroic allies, though two of his battalions, impelled by the instinct of brave men, returned without orders to aid them when they heard the firing, and appeared on the field at the close of the day. The French thus withdrew without farther disaster : and Graham, thoroughly disgusted with the conduct of the Spanish general, some days after re-entered the Isle of Leon, bringing with him in triumph six French guns, one eagle, and three hundred prisoners, after having killed and wounded two thousand of the enemy, with a loss to himself of only twelve hundred men. La Pena speedily followed his example : the bridge of Santi Petri was again broken down. Victor cautiously resumed his position round the bay, where he was soon after joined by Soult returning from his victorious expedition into Estremadura ; and the battle of Barrosa remained without result, save that imperishable one which arises from the confidence which it communicated to the British arms, and the glory which it gave to the British name.¹

85.
Who, however, re-enter the walls of Cadiz.

¹ Sir T. Graham's Desp. 6th March 1811. Gurw. vii. 382. Nap. iii. 442, 445. Vict. et Conq. xx. 226, 231. Helm. i. 173, 174.

Immediate, however, as well as ultimate results, attended the retreat of Massena from his position at Santarem. Having exhausted the last means of subsistence which the country he occupied would afford, and finding his marauders at length returning on all sides empty-handed from their excursions, this veteran commander commenced his retreat. He chose for its line the valley of the Mondego, and the road of Almeida ; but as this required the passage, in presence of the enemy, of the range of mountains which separates that valley from that of the

86.
Massena's skilful and system of retreat.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

Zezere, where his forces lay, by an army encumbered with an immense train of artillery, and ten thousand sick, the operation was one which required to be conducted with extreme caution. The great military talents of the hero of Aspern here shone forth with the brightest lustre. Forming his army into a solid mass, under the uniform protection of a powerful rearguard commanded by Ney, he retired slowly and deliberately, without either confusion or forced marches, and constantly availing himself of the numerous strong positions which the country afforded, to take his stand in such a manner that he required to be dislodged by a flank movement of the pursuing force, which necessarily required time, and gave opportunity for the main body and carriages to defile quietly in the rear.¹

¹ Gurw. vii.
481. Nap.
iii. 455.
Belm. i. 165.

87.
Various
actions
during the
retreat.
March 8.

Two days were necessarily occupied at first by Wellington in watching the enemy, as his line of retreat was not yet declared, and he had assembled Ney's corps near Leyria, as if menacing the lines of Torres Vedras. But no sooner did it clearly appear that he had taken the valley of the Mondego, and was retiring in good earnest, than the whole allied force to the north of the Tagus was put in motion after him. The bulk of his forces was directed by Wellington on Leyria, whither also were moved the reinforcements, six thousand strong, which had recently arrived from England, in order to stop the enemy from moving on Oporto and the northern provinces of the kingdom. To gain time, the French general offered battle at Pombal, which obliged Wellington to concentrate his troops, and to bring up the two divisions which had been sent across the Tagus to relieve Badajoz. But no sooner were seven divisions united, than Massena retired, and a slight skirmish alone took place between the two armies. On the 12th, Ney, with the rearguard, stood firm at Redinha, at the mouth of a long defile, through which the main body of the army was retiring; and the splendid spectacle was exhibited of thirty thousand men marching in an open plain against this position. At their approach, however, Ney abandoned it without any considerable loss.²

March 9.

March 10.

March 12.
² Nap. iii.
455, 465.
Belm. i. 165,
166. Well.
Desp. Gurw.
vii. 481.

Coimbra at this period appears to have been the point towards which the French were tending; but the fortunate occupation of that town, at this juncture, by Trant's

militia, and the report which, though erroneous, was believed, that the reinforcements for the British army had been forwarded by sea to the mouth of the Mondego, and had arrived there, induced Massena to change the line of his retreat, and he fell back towards Almeida by the miserable road of Miranda del Corvo. Frightful ravages every where marked his steps: not only were the villages invariably burned, and the peasants murdered who remained in them, but the town of Leyria and convent of Alcobaça were given to the flames by express orders from the French headquarters. But these barbarities soon produced their usual effect of augmenting the distresses of the retreating army. The narrow road was soon blocked up by carriages and baggage waggons; confusion began to prevail; distress and suffering were universal; and nothing but the absence of two divisions of his army, which Wellington had been obliged again to detach across the Tagus to stop the progress of Soult, and secure Elvas after the fall of Badajoz, saved the enemy from vigorous attack and total ruin. But as the retiring mass was, after that large deduction, considerably stronger than the pursuing, Wellington could not press the enemy, as he might have done had he possessed an equal force; and Massena arrived at Celorico, grievously distressed and almost destitute, but without any serious fighting, and the loss only of a thousand stragglers. The French general was there joined by Claparede's division, nine thousand strong, of the reserve corps collected by Napoleon in Biscay; and he resolved to remain there, and still maintain the war in Portugal. Ney, however, positively refused to obey this order, alleging the necessity of retiring to Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo to give repose to the army; and to such a length did the discord between these two chiefs arise, that Massena deprived him of his command, and bestowed it on Loison.¹

The indecision of the French marshal what course to adopt, however, was soon terminated by the approach of Wellington, who came up and drove him from the new line of operations he was endeavouring to take up on Coria and Alcantara; the noble defensive position of Guarda was abandoned in confusion; and the French army again forced back on the line of the Coa, with the loss of two

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

88.
Continuation
of the retreat
to the fron-
tier.

March 14.

March 21.

¹ Well. to
Lord
Bathurst,
April 4,
1811. Gurw.
vii. 415, 435.
Vict. et
Conq. xx.
197, 199.
Nap. 473,
488.

89.
Action at
Sabugal, and
vast losses
during the
retreat
April 3.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1811.

thousand prisoners. Regnier's position at Sabugal, when the allied troops approached him, suggested to the English general the project of cutting him off from the remainder of the army, and compelling him to surrender. This well-designed enterprise failed in obtaining complete success, from the attack being prematurely made by the British advanced guard before the flanking columns had come up, and the movement of the troops being somewhat perplexed by a violent storm of rain which came on, accompanied with thick fog. As it was, however, the French, after a protracted conflict, and alternate success and defeat, were compelled to retire with the loss of one howitzer and a thousand men, including three hundred prisoners, and all Loison's baggage. On the same day, Trant destroyed three hundred of the enemy on the banks of the Agueda. These checks convinced Massena of the justice of Ney's opinion, that the army must seek for rest behind the cannon of Ciudad Rodrigo; and he therefore threw a garrison into Almeida, and retreated with the bulk of his forces across the frontier to that fortress, and thence to Salamanca. He entered Portugal with seventy thousand men; ten thousand joined him under Drouet at Santarem, and nine thousand on the retreat to the Agueda; and he brought only forty-five thousand of all arms out of the country. He lost, therefore, the enormous number of forty-five thousand men during the invasion and retreat, by want, sickness, and the sword of the enemy: while the British were not weakened to the extent of a fourth part of the number.^{1*}

April 5.
¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
197, 202.
Well. Desp.
4th and 9th
Apr. 1811.
Gurw. vii.
415, 435.
Nap. ii. 473,
488. Jom.
iii. 493, 494.

90.
Blockade of
Almeida, and
efforts of
Massena for
its relief.
April 15.

Almeida was immediately invested by Wellington; and as the French had retired to such a distance, and gone into cantonments on the Tormes, he deemed it safe to send a considerable part of his army, about twenty-two thousand strong, to the south of the Tagus, to co-operate with the troops which Beresford had collected for the siege of Campo Mayor and Badajoz, and repaired there himself to conduct the operations. Napoleon, however, was resolved not to permit the English general to gain

* "The army of Portugal, grievously weakened by the losses of its long and disastrous retreat, could hardly, on re-entering Spain, muster thirty-five thousand combatants. The cavalry had only two thousand men in a condition to march: the artillery could only muster up twelve pieces."—BELMAS, *Jour. des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, i. 176.

possession of the frontier fortresses without a struggle ; and he transmitted peremptory orders to Massena instantly to break up from the Tormes with his own three corps, and a considerable part of Bessières' reserve, which was ordered to join him from Biscay, and attempt the relief of Almeida, which had only provisions for fourteen

CHAP.
LXIII.
1811.

April 29.

days. He accordingly again put his army in motion, and advanced to Ciudad Rodrigo in the end of April ; and on the 2d May crossed the Agueda at the bridge of that place, with fifty thousand men, including five thousand noble horse sent him from Bessières' corps. Wellington hastened from Elvas, where his head-quarters had been established, and drew up his covering army, about thirty thousand strong, including sixteen hundred cavalry, on the summit of a vast plateau, between the Turones and the Dos Casas ; the left at Fort Conception, the centre opposite Alameda, the right at FUENTES D'ONORE, and stretching thence to Poço Velho, both of which villages were strongly occupied. The whole line was five miles in length, and the front was difficult of access, by reason of the Dos Casas flowing in a deep ravine across nearly its whole extent.¹

1 Well. Desp.
8th May
1811. Gurw.
vii. 514, and
viii. 486.
Nap. iii. 505,
509. Belm.
i. 176. Jom.
iii. 495.

No sooner had the enemy formed on the ground on the afternoon of the 3d, than they commenced a vigorous attack on the village of Fuentes d'Onore, which was occupied by five battalions. So vehement was their onset, so heavy their cannonade, that the British were forced to abandon the streets, and with difficulty maintained themselves on a craggy eminence at one end, around an old chapel. Wellington upon this reinforced the post with the 24th, 71st, and 79th regiments, which charged so vigorously down the streets that the enemy were driven out with great loss ; and these battalions occupied the village throughout the night, the French retaining only a small part of its lower extremity. On the following day Massena collected his whole army close to the British position, and made his final dispositions for the attack. The Coa, which ran along the rear of nearly their whole line, was in general bordered by craggy precipices ; so that, if the allied army could be thrown into confusion, their retreat appeared almost impracticable. The convoy of provisions destined for the relief of

91.
First combat
of Fuentes
d'Onore.
May 3.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

¹ Vict. et
Cong. xx.
205, 207.
Belm. i. 177,
178. Well.
Desp. 8th
May 1811.
Gurw. vii.
515, 517.
Nap. iii. 512,
513.

92.
Battle of
Fuentes
d'Onore.
May 5.

Almeida, was at Gallegos, seven miles in the rear, ready to move on as soon as the road was opened. For this purpose the grand attack was to be made upon the British right, where an entrance to the plateau, on level ground, could be found; for the whole front of their position was covered by the rugged ravine of the Dos Casas, which separated the two armies in front, and was in most places wholly impassable for cavalry, and in some even for infantry. With this view three divisions of infantry, twenty-four thousand strong, and nearly all the cavalry, were, late on the evening of the 4th, drawn to the extreme French left, and posted so as to attack at daybreak the British right flank, on the neck of land, about three miles broad, where the plateau on which their army rested joined the level heights between the source of the Turones and the Dos Casas. Perceiving this movement, Wellington on his part brought up his left and centre farther to the right, and posted them along the Dos Casas, from Fuentes d'Onore on the left, through Poço Velho, to the neighbourhood of Nava d'Aver on the right, where they touched Don Julian Sanchez's men.¹

Early next morning the attack was commenced with great vehemence on the British right, under General Houston, near Poço Velho; and the enemy speedily drove them out of that village. Don Julian Sanchez, who commanded a body of three thousand guerillas on the extreme British right, immediately retired across the Turones; and Montbrun, finding the plain now open, fell with above four thousand admirable cuirassiers on the British and Portuguese horse, not twelve hundred strong. They were gallantly met and partially checked by the allied cavalry under General Charles Stewart, who took the colonel of one of the regiments, La Motte, prisoner in the mêlée with his own hand. But the combat was too unequal; and, after a gallant effort, our horse were driven behind the cover of the light division and Houston's troops. Montbrun instantly swept, with his terrible cuirassiers, round the now exposed infantry. Houston's men rapidly formed square and repelled the attack; but so swift was the French onset that, ere a similar formation could be effected by the seventh division, the shock of steel was upon them. Though the

Chasseurs Britanniques and some of the Brunswick infantry, with admirable steadiness taking advantage of a ruined wall, repelled the charge *in line*, yet some were cut down, and Captain Ramsay's troop of horse-artillery was entirely surrounded.¹ All gave them over for lost: but, after they had for a while been concealed from the view by the glancing throng of cuirassiers, an English shout was heard, and that noble officer was seen bursting through the throng, his horses bounding with their guns over the plain, and the mounted gunners in close order protecting the rear. But still the progress of the enemy in this quarter was very evident; the British right was turned and broken through, and it was apparent that, unless the ground lost could be regained, or a new defensive position defying attack taken up, the battle would be lost.²

Wellington's position was now in the highest degree critical. In his rear were the ravines of the Turones and the Coa, extremely rugged and difficult of passage; while his right, the key of his position commanding the entrance of the plateau, from the small body of cavalry at his disposal, was unable to make head against the enemy. In these circumstances he took a hazardous resolution, but one which the admirable steadiness of his troops enabled him to execute with perfect success. He drew back the whole centre and right wing of his army, the left being drawn up and remaining firm at Fuentes d'Onore, as the pivot on which the backward wheel was performed, in order to take up a new position facing to the original right of the line, and nearly at right angles to it, on a ridge of heights which ran across the plateau, and stretched from the ravine of the Dos Casas to that of the Turones. Such a retreat however, in the course of which the outer extremity of the line had to retire four miles over a level plateau, enveloped by a formidable and victorious cavalry, was most hazardous. The plain over which the troops were retiring was soon covered with carriages and fugitives from the camp-followers; and if any of the divisions had given way, the enemy would have burst in upon them with such forces, as would have sent the disorderly multitude headlong against some of its own squares, and thrown the whole into irreparable confusion.² Meanwhile, a fierce contest

CHAP.
LXIII.
1811.

¹ Nap. iii. 513.

² Well. Desp. 8th May 1811
Gurw. vii. 516, 517.
Viet. et Conq. xx. 208, 209.
Nap. iii. 512, 513. Lond. ii. 104, 106.
Belm. i. 178, 179. Jom. iii. 497.

93.
Obstinate nature of the fight.

² Well. Desp. Gurw. vii. 517, 518.
Nap. iii. 515.
Viet. et Conq. xx. 208, 210.
Belm. i. 178.

CHAP.
LXIII.
1811.

was going on in Fuentes d'Onore, where the three victorious regiments who had held it two days before, after a gallant resistance, were pierced through, Colonel Cameron of the 71st was mortally wounded, and the lower part of the town taken.

94.
Steady
retreat of the
British
centre and
right.

But in that dread hour, perhaps the most perilous of the whole war for England, she was saved by the skill of her chief and the incomparable valour of her soldiers. Slowly, and in perfect order, the squares of the 1st, 7th, and light divisions, retired for several miles, flanked on either side by the terrible cuirassiers of Montbrun, flushed with the newly won glories of Wagram ;* pressed in rear by the columns and batteries of Ney's corps, which had broken the Russian army at Friedland.† In vain their charging squadrons swept round these serried bands, and the light of the British bayonets was for a time lost in the blaze of the French cuirasses. From every throng the unbroken squares still emerged, pursuing their steady way amidst a terrific fire ; the seventh division successfully accomplished its long semicircular sweep, crossed the Turones, and took up its ground between that stream and the Coa ; the centre of the army soon gained the ridge of heights for which it was destined ; a scarlet line was seen on the summit of the steep, with frequent guns through its interstices ; while what was now the left, with invincible firmness, still made good the crags and chapel of Fuentes d'Onore. In this new position, still barring the approach to Almeida, Wellington quietly awaited the renewed attack of the enemy.¹

1 Gurw. vii.
517, 518.
Vict. et
Conq. xx.
208, 210.
Nap. iii. 515.

95.
Massena's
ultimate
failure.

When the whole had taken up their ground, Massena recoiled from the prospect of attacking such an enemy as he had just been combating, posted in dense masses on a ridge not two miles in length, and covered on either flank by a steep ravine ; and, confining himself to a cannonade along its front, redoubled his efforts on the British left, where he sent the whole division of Drouet against the village of Fuentes d'Onore. But though the fighting was most desperate all day in that quarter, though the enemy at one period had got possession of nearly the whole village, and his skirmishers penetrated through on the other side towards the main position, the British always retained part

* *Ante*, Chap. lix. § 50.

† *Ante*, Chap. xlii. § 56.

of the houses ; and at length, when the concentration of his forces enabled Wellington to reinforce his left by fresh troops, they were driven through the streets with great slaughter by a charge of the 71st, 79th, and 88th regiments.* On this occasion, one of the very few such in the war, the bayonets crossed, and the Imperial Guards, some of whom were lifted from the ground in the shock, and borne backward a few paces in the air, were forced to give ground before the Highland regiments.† Night put an end to the slaughter in this quarter ; the British retained their position around the chapel and on the crags, and the French retired across the Dos Casas. Fifteen hundred men had fallen or were made prisoners on both sides ; and yet neither could claim decided advantage.¹

Though the British lost ground on all points but the extreme left during this battle, and were certainly nearer experiencing a defeat than in any other action in Spain, yet the result proved that they had gained their object. Massena lingered three days in front of the allied position, which Wellington strengthened with field-works, and rendered altogether unassailable. At length, despairing of either forcing or turning the British lines, he retreated across the Agueda, leaving Almeida to its fate ; having first sent orders to the governor, General Brennier, by an intrepid soldier named Tillet, to blow up the works, and endeavour to effect his retreat through the blockading

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

¹ Well. Desp.
8th May 1811.
Gurw. vii.
517, 518.
Nap. iii. 515,
516. Jom.
iii. 496, 497.
Vict. et
Conq. xx.
208, 211.

96.
Massena's
evacuation of
Almeida,
and his re-
treat.
May 9.

* The ensign who carried the colours of the 79th in this dreadful struggle was killed. The covering sergeant immediately called out, " An officer to bear the colours of the 79th ! " One came forward, and was immediately struck down. " An officer to bear the colours of the 79th ! " again shouted the sergeant, and another hero succeeded, who was also killed. A third time, and a fourth, the sergeant called out in like manner as the bearers of the colours were successively struck down ; till at length no officer remained unwounded but the gallant adjutant, who sprang forward and seized the colours, saying, " The 79th shall never want one to carry its colours while I can stand." He bore them in safety through the glorious fight. A parallel incident occurred in ancient times.—" Quidam ante portam oppidi Gallus, qui glebas in ignem e regione turris projiciebat, scorpiones ab latere dextro transfixus exanimatusque concidit. Hunc ex proximis unus jacentem transgressus eodem illo munere fungebatur. Eadem ratione ictu scorpionis exanimato altero, successit tertius, et tertio quartus ; nec prius ille est a propugnatoribus vacuus relictus locus quam, restincto aggre atque omni parte submotis hostibus, finis est pugnandi factus." CÆSAR, *de Bello Gallico*, vii. 25. How identical is the heroic spirit, the grand and the generous, in every age !

† The 71st Highlanders had been quartered recently before this in Glasgow, and largely recruited in that city. When ordered to charge, their brave commander exclaimed, " Now, my lads, let us show them how we can *clear the Gallowgate* ! " This allusion to a well-known street in Glasgow, where the barracks stood, was received with a shout of applause, and immediately followed by the decisive charge which drove back the Imperial Guard.—*Personal Knowledge*.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

force. These directions were obeyed with surprising skill and success. At midnight on the 10th this brave man blew up the bastions, and, sallying forth, marched swiftly and bravely forward to the Barba del Puerco, which he had ascertained was the most unguarded point of the allied line. The fourth regiment, which was ordered to occupy that point, did not receive its instructions in time; and when it did, unfortunately missed its road in the dark. The consequence was, that Brennier, with eleven hundred of his gallant followers, got clear off, and joined Massena near Ciudad Rodrigo; but four hundred were killed or made prisoners in crossing the deep chasm of the Barba del Puerco. Wellington on the day following took possession of Almeida, in which the artillery was entire, but several large chasms existed in the walls. Massena withdrew to Salamanca and the banks of the Tormes, and the last act in the eventful drama of the invasion of Portugal was terminated.¹

¹ Well. Desp. Gur. vii. 548. Nap. iii. 519, 522. Vict. et Conq. xx. 212, 213. Jom. iii. 499. May 12.

97.
Barbarous conduct of the French during the retreat.

² Well. Desp. March 14, 1811. Gurw. vii. 348.

The retreat of the French from Portugal, a model of military skill and ability on the part both of the soldiers and commanders, was disgraced by a systematic and deliberate cruelty which can never be sufficiently condemned. We have the authority of Wellington for the assertion, that "their conduct was, throughout the retreat, marked by a barbarity seldom equalled, never surpassed. Even the towns of Torres Novas, Thomar, and Pernes, in which the headquarters had been for several months, and in which the inhabitants had been invited by promises of safety to remain, were plundered, and in part destroyed, on the night the retreat began; and they have since burned every town and village through which they passed."² A single incident will illustrate the horrors of such a system of warfare better than any general description, and it comes from a gallant eyewitness, whose graphic powers are never called forth by mawkish sensibility, or his indignant feelings excited by undue hostility towards his adversaries. "A large house, situated in an obscure part of the mountains, was discovered filled with starving persons. Above thirty women and children had sunk; and sitting by the bodies were fifteen or sixteen survivors, of whom only one was a man, but all so enfeebled as to be unable to eat the little food which we had to offer

them. The youngest had fallen first; all the children were dead: none were emaciated in the bodies, but the muscles of the face were invariably drawn transversely, giving the appearance of laughing, and presenting the most ghastly sight imaginable. The men seemed most eager for life; the women appeared patient and resigned; and even in this distress had arranged the bodies of those who first died, with decency and care."¹

CHAP.
LXIII.
1811.

¹ Nap. iii.
457.

Such is ambition in its most terrible form; such the result of the atrocious system which, under the specious pretence of making war support war, consigns the innocent inhabitants of invaded countries, old men, women, and children, to ineffable misery, starvation, and death. Doubtless such horrors have in every age attended serious and long-continued hostility, and they are sometimes unavoidable where great bodies of men, inflamed by violent passions, are brought into collision. But it is the peculiar and characteristic disgrace of the French Revolutionary armies, that they were not merely permitted, but enjoined by the commanders; and that those atrocities which in other armies spring from the license or brutality of the soldiers, and which the officers labour assiduously to prevent, were with them systematically acted upon by all ranks, and flowed from the system which, impressed upon the generals by the rapacity of government, was by them reduced to a regular form, and enjoined in general orders emanating from headquarters. "The convent of Alcobaca," says Wellington, "was burned by orders from the French headquarters. The bishop's palace, and the whole town of Leyria, where General Drouet had his headquarters, shared the same fate; and there is not an inhabitant of the country, of any class or description, who has had any communication or dealing with the French army, who has not had reason to repent of it."²

98.
Reflections
on these
shocking
barbarities.

² Well. to
Lord Liver-
pool, 14th
March 1811.
Gur. vii. 188,
196, 348.

But these unheard-of atrocities, thus communicated to vast armies by a regular system of plunder, and exercised on a great scale in every part of Europe, were at length producing their natural effects. Unspeakable was the indignation excited in the Portuguese peasantry by such revolting cruelties; and although the inefficiency and desire for popularity in the regency at Lisbon for long paralysed the efforts of the country, and rendered in

99.
Noble quali-
ties evinced
by the Por-
tuguese
peasantry.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1811.

some degree unavailing the ardent spirit of the people, yet the most perfect unanimity prevailed among the rural inhabitants, and the British were supported in their enterprises by the peasantry with a cordiality and fidelity which were honourable alike to both nations. Wellington has told us, that in no single instance were the humbler ranks in Portugal discovered in any correspondence with the enemy; that the prisoners, though in some instances obliged to join the French ranks, all deserted on the first opportunity to the standard of their country; that the Portuguese peasants, though of such different habits, agreed admirably with the English soldiers; and that, though great numbers of crimes were committed, especially at first, by the disorderly Irish, who formed so large a part of many regiments newly sent out, yet it was next to impossible to get the natives who had suffered to come forward and give evidence against them. These are truly noble traits in national character, and combined with the heroic stand which, under British guidance, they made against their tremendous enemy, despite all the weakness and imbecility of their rulers, prove that materials for greatness exist in the Peninsula, if the time shall ever arrive when the spirit and energy of the higher ranks, then altogether wanting, shall equal the courage and virtue of the people.¹

¹ Well. Desp. Gur. vi. 105, 520, and viii. 105.

100.
Grant by parliament, and subscriptions in England for their relief.
Feb. 24.

Nor were these noble qualities in the Portuguese peasantry even then without their reward. Their bravery and their suffering excited the warmest sympathy in Great Britain; the enthusiasm of all classes, ever readily awakened in the cause of wo, was roused to the highest pitch. A grant of a hundred thousand pounds by parliament, to the sufferers by the French invasion, was passed without a single dissentient voice in the House of Commons; private subscriptions in every town and village of the empire soon trebled its amount; and the noblest qualities in our nature, patriotism and charity, excited by the heart-stirring course of events to the very highest pitch, poured forth from two perennial fountains a stream of mingled energy and benevolence which was, because it deserved to be, invincible.²

² Ann. Reg. 1811, 37.
Parl. Deb. xix. 447, 452.

Immense was the effect produced by the glorious termination of the war in Portugal, on the British nation and

the whole of Europe. The French armies had at length been brought to a stand; and that apparently irresistible torrent of conquest, which had hitherto flowed over the whole of Europe, was now to all appearance permanently arrested. Experience had proved, that by combining military discipline and regular forces with vast exertions and patriotic enthusiasm, a barrier could be opposed to revolutionary aggression. The failure of Austria, in her late heroic attempt, was forgotten in the still more recent triumph of England: Russia, contemplating a similar attack upon her own independence, watched with intense anxiety the interesting struggle, and beheld, in the defensive system and triumph of Wellington, both the model on which her defensive preparations should be formed, and the best grounds to hope for a successful issue from her own exertions. But the effect produced in England was still greater, and if possible more important. Proportioned to the breathless suspense in which the nation had been kept by the advance of Massena, and the confident predictions of immediate success with which it had been preceded, from many in the British Islands and all on the Continent, the universal joy which prevailed when the prospect of unlooked-for success began at last to dawn upon the nation.

The battle of Busaco first flashed through the gloom of general despondence, occasioned by the retreat of Wellington into the interior of Portugal. Ere long, however, its cheering light faded, and the public mind was more violently agitated than ever, when, after such a triumph, the retreat was still continued to the close vicinity of Lisbon. But when Wellington at last took his stand, and through the thick clouds with which the horizon was beset, the lines of Torres Vedras were dimly seen rising in stupendous and impregnable strength, the general enthusiasm knew no bounds. The advantages of the British position, hitherto altogether unknown save to its chief, were at once revealed. It was seen that England possessed an unconquerable stronghold in which she might securely place her resources, where her armies, how numerous soever, would be amply provided for by her fleets; while the forces of Napoleon, however great, would either fall at the foot of the intrenchments, or perish of famine

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

101.
Vast effect
produced by
this campaign
over Europe.102.
And especially
in Great
Britain.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

in the desert which they had created around them. The profound observation of Henry IV., "If you make war in Spain with a small army, you are beaten; with a large one, you are starved," arose in vivid importance to their recollection; and the nation ceased to despair in a contest, in which the very magnitude of the enemy's force had at length been turned with decisive effect against him. Unbounded was the admiration now justly conceived for Wellington, whose foresight had provided this triumph, and whose fortitude had withstood the obloquy necessary to be encountered ere it could be attained.¹

¹ Wall. Desp.
viii. 76, 77,

" Tu Maximus ille es
Unus qui nobis cunctando restituis rem."
* * * * *
" Non ponebat enim rumores ante salutem;
Ergo postque, magisque viri nunc gloria staret."*

103.
Error of Na-
poleon in the
campaign,
and its cause.

There can be no doubt that the simultaneous invasion of Andalusia and Portugal, in a military point of view, was a capital error on the part of Napoleon. It was a direct deviation from his own principle, of bringing all the disposable forces to bear upon the decisive point. The line of the Tagus was the quarter where the decisive blow was to be struck. If Soult, with sixty thousand men, had invaded the Alentejo at the same time that Massena, with eighty thousand, poured down the valley of the Mondego, it is extremely doubtful whether even the strength of Torres Vedras could have enabled Wellington to maintain his ground at Lisbon. No one knew better than the French Emperor that the passage of the Sierra Morena was an eccentric movement, which strengthened the enemy's chances of success at the vital point; but he was driven to adopt it by the political necessities of his situation. France could not, with safety, be more heavily taxed; the central provinces of Spain were utterly exhausted; fresh resources were indispensable; and the simultaneous invasion of Andalusia and Portugal was resorted to in the prospect of securing the spoils of these hitherto untouched fields. Crime and oppression may for long prove victorious, but they bear along with them the seeds of their ultimate punishment, and they are constrained to bring those seeds to maturity by the efforts which they make for their own advancement.²

² Wall. Desp.
vii. 286.

* *Æneid*, vi. 846; and *ENNIUS*.

Government at home were far from being equally impressed with Wellington, during the progress of the campaign, with the chances of ultimate success. They were not aware of the vast strength of the Torres Vedras position; and although they sent out all the succours which he demanded, yet they did so rather in deference to his wishes, and from respect to his opinion of the probabilities of success, than from any belief of their own that his anticipations were well founded. When he drew near to Lisbon, their anxiety was very great; and it was well known that, for a considerable time, they expected that every arrival from that capital would bring the account of his embarkation. Yet, even in that contemplated extremity, they did not despair of the contest; they provided a vast fleet of ships of the line and transports capable of bringing off the British and Portuguese army, with a great number of the inhabitants who were implicated in the war; and gave orders to their general, that if he was driven from Lisbon he should take refuge in Cadiz, and renew the war in Andalusia, from the basis of that city and Gibraltar.¹

This resolution was worthy of the highest admiration; it rivals the noblest instances of Roman constancy, and should make us overlook many previous instances of insensibility to the right mode of carrying on the contest, which had arisen from their long inexperience in military combination. And although we, judging with all the advantages of subsequent experience, may occasionally feel surprised at the gloomy feelings which at times pervaded both government and the nation when the dawn of European deliverance was beginning to appear behind the hills of Torres Vedras, yet it cannot be denied that, judging from past events, both had too good grounds for their prognostications. Recollecting in what disaster all previous expeditions to the Continent had terminated, when engaged only with a part of Napoleon's force, there was little room for hope now that they were assailed by the whole. But from the generality of, and the apparently solid ground for this opinion, is to be drawn the brightest eulogium on the unshaken determination of the chief, which never faltered in the contest, and the clearest proof of the loftiness of the intellect which could discern

CHAP.

LXIII.

1811.

104.

Views of
government
on the cam-
paign.¹ Well. Desp.
Aug. 2, 1810.
Gurw. vii.
300.

105.

Their noble
resolution to
prolong the
contest if
driven from
Lisbon.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1811.

106.

Magnani-
mous prin-
ciple by which
Wellington
was guided.

through the gloom the shadow of coming events, and find in its own strength the means of their accomplishment.

Those, whether in public or private life, who take expedience for the principle of their conduct, are often sadly perplexed what course to adopt, because, in the complicated maze of human events, they cannot see clearly to what end its conclusions point. Those who take duty for their guide are never at a loss, because its dictates are clear, and wholly independent of the changes of fortune. Ordinary observers too often judge of the future by the past, and act on the principle that subsequent events are to be exactly similar to those which have preceded them. It belongs to the highest class of intellect to combine with the experience of the past the observation of the present; to perceive that human events are indeed governed in all ages by the same principles, but that new elements of power are perpetually rising into operation; and that, in every state of human affairs, an under-current is flowing in an opposite direction from that on the surface, bringing salvation to the miserable, and often destined to confound the anticipations of the prosperous. Wellington possessed both the moral principle and the intellectual power requisite for the leader of such a contest as that in which he was now engaged.

107.

The steady
discharge of
duty was his
ruling prin-
ciple.

Alike fearless of danger, and unmoved by obloquy, he looked merely to the discharge of duty: undismayed by the fall of Austria and Russia, he still did not despair of the cause of European freedom, and, with comparatively inconsiderable resources, prepared, in a corner of Portugal, the means of hurling back an enemy who had two hundred and fifty thousand disposable soldiers in the Peninsula at his command. He saw that force originally had drawn forth the powers of the French Revolution, that force had sustained its growth, but that force was now undermining its foundation; and that the power which was based on the misery of every people among whom it penetrated, could not fail of being at length overcome, if combated by an energy equal to its own, accompanied by a forbearance commensurate to its rapacity. Strenuously urging, therefore, upon all the execution of duty, he as scrupulously abstained from the

abuses of power : his efforts to repel the enemy were not greater than those he made to control the license and restrain the disorders of his own army. He preferred a small force, regulated by order and maintained by justice, to a great one elevated on the fruits of rapine. He thus succeeded in at last combating the Revolution with its own weapons, and at the same time detaching from them the moral weakness under which it laboured. He met it with its own forces, but he rested their efforts on a nobler principle. France had conquered Europe by assailing virtue with the powers of intellect, guided by the fire of genius, and stimulated by the passions of wickedness. Wellington conquered France by raising against it the resources of wisdom, sustained by the constancy of duty and directed by the principles of virtue.

CHAP.

LXIII.

1811.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER LX.

Note A, p. 105.

THE losses of Austria by this treaty were :—

	Inhabitants.
In Galicia, to the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, . . .	1,500,000
to Russia, . . .	400,000
In Germany, to Bavaria, and the Kingdom of Italy, . . .	1,124,680
In Italy, to France, and the Kingdom of Italy, . . .	480,680
	<hr/> 3,505,360

The population of Austria, after these losses, was 20,738,541; her frontier was destroyed, both towards France and Italy; she was entirely cut off from all communication with the sea; and lost, besides all the harbours yielding customs, many of the most important mines of salt, silver, lead, and iron in her dominions.—See BIGNON, viii. 377; and HARDENBERG, x. 48–479; and SCHOELL, *Hist. des Traités*, ix. 297, 298; and *Congrès de Vienne, Rec. de Pièces Officielles*, iii. 57, 66.

CHAPTER LXI.

Note A, p. 145.

M. Champagny stated in his answer to Mr Canning's note, which announced the necessity of admitting the Spanish nation to the negotiation: "France and Russia can carry on the war, so long as the court of London shall not recur to just and equitable dispositions; and they are resolved to do so. How is it possible for the French government to entertain the proposal which has been made to it of admitting to negotiation the Spanish insurgents? What would the

English government have said had it been proposed by them to admit the Catholic insurgents of Ireland? France, without having any treaties with them, has been in communication with them, has made them promises, and has frequently sent them succours. Could such a proposal have found place in a note, the object of which ought to have been, not to irritate, but to conciliate, and to effect a good understanding? England will *find herself under a strange mistake, if, contrary to the experience of the past, she still entertains the idea of contending successfully upon the Continent against the armies of France.* What hope can she now have, especially as France is irrevocably united to Russia? The only admissible basis is to receive as parties to the negotiation all the allies of the King of England—whether it be the king who reigns in the Brazil, the king who reigns in Sweden, the king who reigns in Sicily—and to take for the basis of the negotiation the *Uti possidetis*."—CHAMPAGNY to Mr Secretary CANNING, 28th Nov^r 1808; *Parl. Deb.* xii. 101.

Note B. p. 157.

The Budget of Great Britain and Ireland for 1809, stood as follows:—

INCOME.

Malt, Pensions, &c.,	£3,000,000
Surplus of Consolidated fund,	4,000,000
Surplus Ways and Means, 1808,	2,757,000
War taxes,	19,000,000
Lottery,	300,000
Excess of Exchequer Bills,	3,154,000
Excess of do.,	1,355,000
Vote of credit,	3,000,000
Loan,	11,000,000
Irish Taxes and Loan,	6,000,000
War income,	£53,566,000
Permanent Taxes,	36,959,000
Net Payments,	£90,525,000

EXPENDITURE.

Navy,	£18,986,000
Army,	21,144,000
Ordnance,	5,903,000
Miscellaneous,	1,900,000
Vote of credit,	3,300,000
Swedish subsidy,	300,000
Sicilian do.,	480,000
Interest of Exchequer Bills,	1,927,000
War expenditure,	£53,650,000
Interest of debt,	24,313,000
Sinking Fund,	11,359,000
Total,	£89,522,000

—See *Parl. Deb.* xiv.; *App. No. I.* p. 533; and *Ann. Reg.* 1809, p. 81.

CHAPTER LXIII.

Note A, p. 305.

Income and Expenditure of Great Britain for 1810 :—

I.—INCOME.

Ordinary Revenues.

Customs,	.	.	.	.	.	£9,909,735
Excise,	.	.	.	.	.	18,495,178
Stamps,	.	.	.	.	.	5,546,082
Land and assessed taxes,	.	.	.	.	.	8,011,905
Post-Office,	.	.	.	.	.	1,471,746
Crown Lands,	.	.	.	.	.	110,373
Lesser sources,	.	.	.	.	.	1,250,697
Total permanent,						£44,794,916

Extraordinary.

Customs,	.	.	.	.	.	£3,906,483
Excise,	.	.	.	.	.	6,855,812
Property Tax,	.	.	.	.	.	13,492,315
Lottery,	.	.	.	.	.	471,250
Irish Loan,	.	.	.	.	.	2,448,470
Surplus fees of officers,	.	.	.	.	.	136,398
Loans, including £1,400,000 Irish,	.	.	.	.	.	13,242,356
Grand total net payments,						£86,350,900

II.—EXPENDITURE.

Interest of National Debt, and charges of management,	.	.	.	.	.	£21,773,227
Sinking Fund,	.	.	.	.	.	11,660,601
Interest of Exchequer Bills,	.	.	.	.	.	1,815,105
Civil List,	.	.	.	.	.	1,533,140
Civil government of Scotland,	.	.	.	.	.	118,186
Miscellaneous,	.	.	.	.	.	775,399
Navy,	.	.	.	.	.	20,058,412
Army,	.	.	.	.	.	18,536,300
Ordnance,	.	.	.	.	.	4,652,331
Loans to other countries, viz :						
Sicily,	.	.	.	.	£425,000	
Portugal,	.	.	.	.	1,247,898	
Spain,	.	.	.	.	387,294	
						2,050,082
Miscellaneous,	.	.	.	.	.	2,270,867
						£85,243,620

The total expenditure rose to £89,000,000.—*Parl. Deb. xx. 1-15, Appendix.*

Note B, p. 322.

The exact numbers were—

Estat-major and gendarmes,	.	.	.	.	.	229
2d corps, Ragnier,	.	.	.	.	.	19,232
6th corps, Ney,	.	.	.	.	.	85,067
8th corps, Junot,	.	.	.	.	.	26,431
Reserve of cavalry, Montbrun,	.	.	.	.	.	5,117
						<hr/>
Under Massena's immediate command,	.	.	.	.	.	86,076
In reserve under Drouot at Valladolid,	.	.	.	.	.	22,315
— under Serras at Benevente,	.	.	.	.	.	15,107
— under Bonnet in Asturias,	.	.	.	.	.	14,885
						<hr/>
Total under Massena,	.	.	.	.	.	138,383
—NAPIER, iii. 568, Table.						

END OF VOL. XIII.

